



JOSEPH C. LINCOLN
HAROLD BRETT

PRESENTED TO

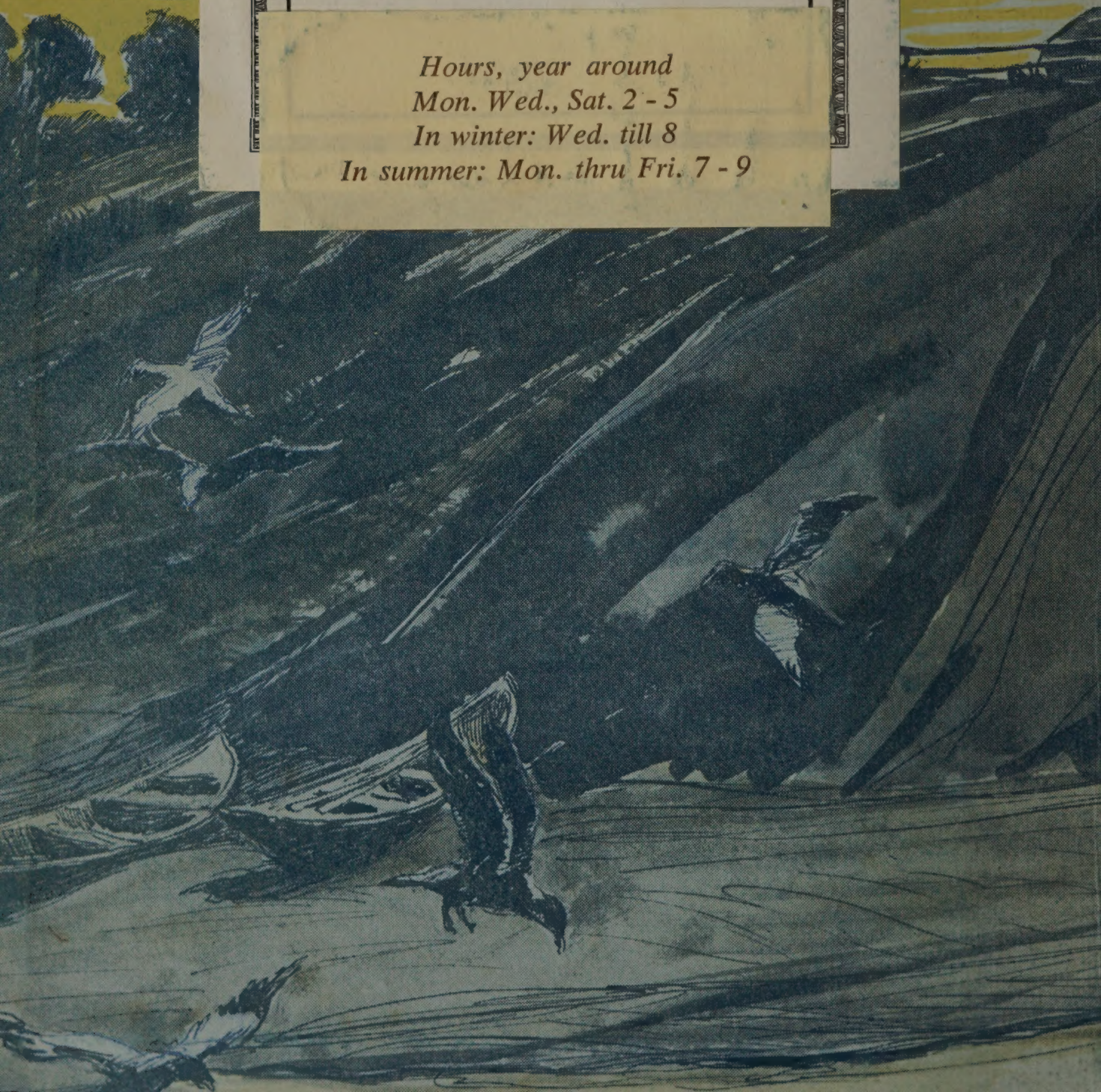
Brewster Ladies' Library



BY

MRS. A.B. SMYTHE

*Hours, year around
Mon. Wed., Sat. 2 - 5
In winter: Wed. till 8
In summer: Mon. thru Fri. 7 - 9*







Cape Cod Yesterdays

1. Eleonore
with kindest regards
Hanna B. B.





CUTTING AND HEADING

CAPE COD YESTERDAYS



• The Road to the Harbor •

by **JOSEPH C. LINCOLN**

• WITH PICTURES BY •
HAROLD BRETT

**LITTLE, BROWN &
COMPANY, BOSTON**

CC
Ref
974
111

Copyright, 1935.

BY JOSEPH C. LINCOLN and HAROLD BRETT

All rights reserved · Published August, 1935

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



A Warning and an Invitation



You said it, didn't you? Or, if you didn't say it, you thought it.

It was summer time perhaps, vacation season, and you had dropped in at the "Mountain Shop" or the "Sea Wind Shoppe." Or, in case your vacation locale is not sufficiently up to date to boast a "shoppe", possibly you visited the "Centre Variety Store, P. Higgins, Proprietor. Gents' Furnishings, Ladies' Outfittings, Hats, Caps, Bathing Suits, Fishing Tackle, Toys, Magazines, Newspapers, Books, Stationery, Cigars, Tobacco, Confectionery, Soft Drinks, Ice Cream, Novelties and Souvenirs."

You were "up street" on an errand, your intention being to buy — well, anything from a few postcards or a packet

of pipe tobacco to a golf cap or a fresh supply of those paper napkins your wife declares she must have at once. "There is no sense whatever in our using linen napkins or doilies here at the cottage. They make such pretty paper ones nowadays and they are so cheap. Think of the laundry bills! Goodness knows you preach to me enough about not wasting money in these dreadful times."

Perhaps Miss Stella Montgomery, who manages the "Shope", was busily and anxiously trying to satisfy the whims of Mrs. Coles-Graham, whose husband is president of the Universal Manufacturing Company, and whose villa on the heights is quite the largest and finest in the county. Or it may be, Mr. Higgins, who owns and personally supervises the "Store", was engaged with a juvenile customer with five cents to spend and a discriminating taste in stick candy. In either case, while you were awaiting your turn, you strolled over to the book-and-magazine counter. And there — let us hope prominently displayed — was a poster advertising this volume; or, and better still, a copy or copies of the volume itself.

Then and there you said or thought it.

Or, as an alternative, let us assume that it was fall or winter. Vacation was over and done with and you were back home in the city or the suburb. Sunday morning, it may have been, and, with breakfast eaten, you were comfortably settled in the armchair in the library, your lap and a square yard of floor in your immediate neighborhood covered with sheets of the Sunday paper. And, prior to giving your attention to the News Section or the Sports Section or the Society Section or the Financial

Section, before concentrating upon any of the really important morning reading, you idly turned the pages of the *Sunday Book Review*. And there you saw the announcement of the publication of this book.

And you said — or thought:

“Another book about Cape Cod! There are so many of them already. *Another* one! Good heavens — why?”

Well, before attempting to answer that “Why”, let me publicly confess that I do not blame you for asking. You were right — this *is* another book about Cape Cod. And there *are* many others. Good ones, too. Books, the preparation of which entailed much research and study; books of history and folklore, dealing with geology and genealogy, with the glorious days of the old clipper ships, with the heyday of the fishing industry; books about old Cape Cod and new Cape Cod, about the land, the towns, the people. Most of them interesting and worthwhile, some of them destined to become classics in their field.

Certainly if we — the artist, the author and the publisher — had set about preparing and offering to the public another book of this kind, a book presuming to compete with the best of them in scope or treatment, your scoffing inquiry would have been justified.

But, you see, we have not presumed to do any such thing.

This particular book came into being as the result of an afternoon’s conversation. The publishing member of the triumvirate responsible for it had invited the artist and the author to lunch with him at a Boston club. And, needless to say, the artist and author had accepted the

invitation. A publisher's invitation is—but we won't discuss that.

Luncheon was over and we were smoking the publisher's cigars and chatting. And, as was natural enough, the subject of our chat was Cape Cod. The artist is a Cape Codder by birth; so is the author. And the publisher—well, the publisher is a Cape Codder by adoption. He visited the Cape when a boy; he spent many happy summers by and on and in the waters washing its sandy shores. Later, after his marriage, he built a cottage in the Cape Cod village of his choice and his wife and children have spent their summers there. He loves the Cape, he boasts of the Cape. He is, as I said, a Cape Codder by adoption and, as an old fisherman of my acquaintance sadly said about the tortoise-shell cat that had presented the family with two sets of kittens in one season, "Them's the worst kind."

Our after-lunch conversation, as I remember, after lazily drifting from Race Point to Falmouth, at last cast anchor abreast the subject of the changes which the years had brought to the Cape. We spent a full two hours at those moorings. The changes were so great and yet, comparatively speaking, so recent. When we came to speak of things which to our fathers and mothers were everyday and commonplace, it was amazing to realize how far off and other-worldly they seemed.

"The automobiles are responsible for most of it," said the artist. "Why, do you remember the old roads? The round trip from Harwich to Hyannis was a day's journey for a pair of horses. And—yes, by George, that was not

more than thirty years ago, if as much. Why, I remember — ”

We all remembered, of course.

“And what has become of the old Cape catboats?” asked the author. “I can remember when thirty to fifty ‘cats’ sailed out of Chatham harbor for the fishing grounds every weekday morning. The gasoline engine ended all that, of course.”

“For that matter,” sighed the publisher, “all varieties of sailing craft are pretty nearly obsolete. I’m still a good many years short of being an octogenarian but I have stood on the gallery of the old lighthouse at Monomoy Point and counted over one hundred sail in sight on a clear day. Catboats and sloops and fore-and-afters and two- and three- and four-masted schooners. Now a sailing vessel is a rarity. Steamers — yes, and motorboats in plenty, but sails — very few. Even the little mackerel seiners are under power.”

The author nodded. “All gone,” he agreed. “But so are so many things that were common not so long ago. The old family carryalls and the blue truck-wagons and the corner blacksmith shops and the fish flakes, with the split cod drying in the sun. It is hard to get hand-salted codfish nowadays. Everyone buys the stuff that comes in boxes or cartons, buys it at the local chain store, too. Since we are asking, — What has become of the old ‘general store’, where you could buy everything from dress goods to molasses?”

The artist shrugged. “Might as well ask what has become of the old salts who used to sit on the benches out-

side those stores and spin yarns. Or the retired deep-sea captains; every Cape town was full of them when I was a boy. Well, they were antiques then and now we are getting to be antiques ourselves. What's the use of sitting here, wailing over the 'good old days'? I'm not sure that they were any better than these days. Different, that's all."

But they were different, we all agreed to that, and we also agreed that it was rather fun to remember and talk about them. The most astonishing thing of all was that so many and such marked changes had occurred in our own lifetime. We wondered — the thought was far from original, of course — if our children and grandchildren would see as great changes while they lived.

And then the publisher had his big idea.

"There must be thousands of Cape Codders," he observed, "or descendants of Cape Codders, or people who, like myself, are spending their summers on the Cape, who are interested in what used to be down there. Oh, I don't mean what was in Colonial days, or even in the early part of the last century. They are interested in that — we all are — but it has been written about over and over again and written well. What I mean is just what we have been talking about this afternoon: the things we remember as children, or perhaps that our fathers and mothers used to tell us about; things that were the usual things then but are gone now, that will never come back, that were only a little while ago but are now as dead as — as —"

"For heaven's sake don't say as dead as the dodo,"

pleaded the author. "That comparison is a genuine antique, if there ever was one."

The publisher ignored the interruption. "What I am getting at is this," he went on. "Suppose you," indicating the author, "wrote some chapters about these things that used to be on the Cape, and you," indicating the artist, "make some pictures to go with them; the writing to be nothing pretentious, just reminiscent, chatty stuff like our talk here. Then suppose our firm published the whole business in a book. Do you think enough people would be interested to make it worth while?"

We did not know. We don't know now. But we said we were willing to try, if he was. And that was the beginning of this book.

This country of ours is, as we all must realize, rapidly becoming standardized. Good roads, motors, increasing and improving railway facilities, long-distance telephones, radios, airplanes — all these are annihilating distance, and sections which were more or less isolated and self-dependent and centered in themselves are now in close touch with all other sections. Travel is easy nowadays and Americans are traveling. Northerners go South in the winter and Southerners come North in summer. East goes West and West comes East.

Consequently, the people of a locality are losing the local habits of life and customs of speech which made them distinctive. Prophesying is a risky profession but, nevertheless, it would seem fairly safe to prophesy that, and before very long, all Americans are going to be pretty much alike.

Not altogether a bad outlook — no, indeed. Travel and association promote understanding and tolerance. But in gaining much, we lose something. We lose the picturesque individuality which was interesting and distinctive. When the author was a boy in a Cape Cod village, there was a firm belief that there was something distinctive in a Cape Codder, something which made him different and recognizable wherever he might be—to another Cape Codder, that is. A friend of mine, born and brought up on the Cape, and who, having made a substantial fortune in a midwestern city, had returned to his native village to spend the years left to him, told this story.

He said that he and his family were taking a trip up the Nile in one of the Cook steamers. Leaning over the rail near the bow of that steamer he noticed a man whose appearance interested him. He watched this man for some time. Then he walked over and accosted him.

“Pardon me,” he said, “but I’m going to ask you a personal question. What part of Cape Cod did you come from?”

The man turned and inspected him carefully. “I hail from Wellfleet,” he said. “What part of the Cape are you from?”

Now I can’t vouch for the truth of this story, but, knowing the man who told it, I believe it. Being a Cape Codder, I should want to believe it anyhow. “Capers” are proud of the Cape, its low rolling hills, its pine groves, its little lakes, its surf-bordered beaches, its white-painted or gray-shingled houses, its sturdy, law-abiding, dryly

witty people. We brag of them whenever we have an opportunity.

Again, when the author was a youngster, there was a saying that the Cape Codder born and bred — or, excuse me, brought up — was perfectly certain of three things. First, that Cape Cod was the finest place in the world. Second, that Cape Codders were the finest people in the world. Third, that he himself was finer than any other Cape Codder.

With a background like that, it was no wonder that the artist and the author welcomed the opportunity to paint and write of the Cape they knew as boys, or that, in certain instances, they had heard their parents talk about. The Cape was left ever so much more to itself then. There were summer boarders and visitors from the city, but not nearly so many of them. The winter populations of the towns were then almost as large as the summer populations. We welcomed our city friends but they must take us as we were; we did not change our mode of life to suit their convenience. If we chose to “cal’late” or “presume likely” when expressing our opinion, we did so, a good many of us. We took our guests driving over our sandy roads and if they ventured to wonder why our buggies and carryalls were several inches wider from wheel to wheel than those to which they were accustomed in urban districts, we let them wonder. The broad-gauged vehicles were made for us, made for Cape Cod customers by the builders. They had been made that way for generations. They suited us and that was sufficient.

We do not use them any more, but that is because our

roads, the vast majority of them, are no longer rutted. We have our automobiles now and our roads are like city roads. Our towns are, in summer, crowded with city sojourners and we are delighted to have them so. Our streets and our beaches are bordered with handsome cottages or homes where people who, like our friend the publisher, come with their families in the late spring and remain until the fall. And, also and again, like the publisher, they have learned to love the Cape and its people. And, in learning to love and understand the locality and its habitants, they readily recognize the fact that the Cape Coddler is still, in spite of his sophistication, just as sturdily independent and self-respecting as he always was. If he likes you he will "accommodate" you by working for you, but he will not be condescended to or patronized. If he doesn't like you — well, that is your loss, that is all.

It is to Cape Codders, and the descendants of Cape Codders, and to the many, many Cape Codders by adoption that this book is offered. Possibly you, like the artist and the author and the publisher, may occasionally talk about the Cape that used to be and is no more. Perhaps you may care to "remember." If so, why, here is a help to the remembering.

Some years ago, at some dinner or other, the author heard William Allen White tell the following story: An old Kansas farmer attended the funeral, in his native town, of a citizen of that town. The clergyman who presided was very, very eulogistic of the deceased. He proclaimed his virtues to the skies and continued to proclaim.

After a while the farmer rose, tiptoed over to the coffin, looked in and tiptoed back to his seat. His neighbor whispered in his ear, "What did you do that for?" The old man shook his head. "Well," he whispered in return, "I'd begun to think I'd come to the wrong funeral."

If there are any statistics in this volume, they are there by mistake. History — real, bonafide schoolbook history — has been avoided. If a part of the Cape was pushed up by the glaciers of the Ice Age and another part washed up by the sea, I ask you to look elsewhere for proof. If you wish to know how many Cape Cod men manned our privateers in the War of 1812, or how many soldiers enlisted from Barnstable County in the Civil War, I shall not tell you. All those questions and facts are important and interesting but they have been ably handled by others. If you want that kind of book, do not turn the pages of this one. You will have come to the wrong funeral.

But if you care to "I remember" for a while; if you wish to linger for a little with old times on the Cape — not very, very old times; at the most not more than a generation ago — if you care to travel lazily back to a boyhood or girlhood spent in whole or part on the "right arm of Massachusetts", you are cordially invited to join us. The old-time catboat is alongside the wharf. Shall we "cast off"?



A WARNING AND AN INVITATION, v
GOING TO MEETING, 3
I'VE BEEN UP TO BOSTON CITY, 21
THE PACKET'S IN, 38
CLAMS AND QUAHAUGS, 46
TEN CENTS A STICK, 64
PICKING TIME, 75
BANK UP FOR WINTER, 93
THE RUDE FOREFATHERS, 112
GUNNING, 126
FISH WEIRS, 144
RARE OLD SANDWICH, 160
HEAVE AND HAUL, 181
WOULD YOU LIKE FOR ANY? 201
GRIST TO THE MILL, 215
WRECK ASHORE, 230
CHARACTERS AND YARNS, 256



CUTTING AND HEADING, *frontispiece*

THURSDAY NIGHT PRAYER MEETING, 12

THE OLD CHATHAM-HARWICH STAGE, 34

THE OLD BREWSTER PACKET LEAVING FOR
BOSTON CITY, 44

CAPTAIN HUNTER, AN OLD SCALLOP
FISHERMAN, 58

THE HERRING RUN, 66

CRANBERRY TIME, 78

GATHERING SEAWEED FOR THE WINTER, 100

THE OLD GRAVEYARD AT TRURO, 120

GUNNING ON THE MARSHES, 136

THE FISH WEIRS ON OLD BREWSTER SHORES
AT TWILIGHT, 148

THE GENERAL STORE, 174

HEAVING AND HAULING ON OLD
MONOMOY, 184

“WOULD YOU LIKE FOR ANY?” 208

THE OLD WINDMILL AT STAGE HARBOR, 220

A WRECK OFF MONOMOY, 240

TIME OFF FOR GRUB, 270

Cape Cod Yesterdays





Going to Meeting



A CAPE COD church is a church nowadays. Even in my boyhood it was a church — that is, most of the younger generation called it that — but Grandmother never did. To her it was a “meeting-house.” In her youth all churches were meeting-houses, the term dating back presumably to early Colonial days, when the parish church was the center of the community, and all gatherings of importance, secular as well as religious, were held within its walls. Not so many years ago the signpost at the corner of the lower road in Brewster read “East Dennis Meeting-House 4 miles.” Our Puritan ancestors measured distance from one house of God to the next.

Mother and Aunt Mary, and Father when he was home from sea, went to church on Sunday, but Grandmother still went to meeting. When she dressed in her best clothes she put on her "Sunday-go-to-meetings." And, on the few occasions when she was ill and could not go, she invariably asked me to be sure and learn the text "down to meeting" so as to repeat it to her on my return.

We shall probably do a good deal of wondering in the course of these reminiscent chats. Just now we are wondering if anything has, during the past fifty or sixty years, changed more than the New England Sunday. New Englanders, the majority of them, still go to church on Sunday mornings and the children still go to Sunday school. It is, even yet, in many Cape Cod households, considered wicked to do certain things on Sunday that are perfectly respectable and moral to do on a weekday. But the narrow lane through which the righteously respectable even of our young days were permitted to walk from rising time on a Sabbath morning to twelve that night has widened until it has become, by comparison, almost a boulevard.

On Saturday evening, when bedtime came and, according to routine, toys were put away in the sitting-room closet, I knew that I was bidding them good-by until Monday. When my lead or paper soldiers were dismissed from parade and retired to their barracks in the box, I realized that war was over for at least thirty-six hours. When I kicked off my everyday boots and hung up my mended and comfortable everyday jacket and trousers, I knew that, when I next dressed, it would be in the prim

and stiff and spotless garments befitting what Grandmother often said her mother used to call "Sabba' Day." The weekday garb was easy and satisfactory, the other was not; but there was no escape. On Saturday night we had baked beans and brown bread for supper. On Sunday morning we "dressed up." One custom was as inevitable as the other.

For breakfast the baked beans again — warmed over, of course — and fish balls. I don't remember ever having fish balls on Saturday, but we never failed to have them Sunday morning. Sometimes rye-meal muffins instead of the brown bread, but beans and fish balls always. A solid orthodox breakfast like that laid the foundation for the orthodox day that followed.

The family were dressed up, too. Grandmother in her black silk, Mother in her black silk, Aunt Mary in her black silk and I in my "other suit" — "You must be careful and not get any spots on that jacket, remember" — and the starched, uncomfortable collar which I loathed. And, after breakfast — nothing; no toys, no games, no — as now — Sunday newspapers with "funny pages"; no anything, except waiting until it was time to go to church — or meeting.

That statement isn't wholly true, that is, as applied to our house. Our household was not as orthodox as some and we were permitted to read, even on Sunday. And to read whatever we chose — within certain limits. The Ladies' Select Circulating Library was only a short distance away and in that library was a "Juvenile Corner" where, upon the shelves, were long rows of Oliver Optic

and Horatio Alger and Harry Castlemon and Mayne Reid. Do you remember Mayne Reid? "The Boy Hunters" and "Afloat on the Amazon" and "The Desert Home." Surely you remember Castlemon. "Frank on a Gunboat" and "Frank Before Vicksburg" and "Frank on Don Carlos' Rancho." There was not a boy in our town who did not know Frank Nelson and his cousin Archie Winters and the two trappers, Dick Lewis and Old Bob Kelly. Don't you remember how, when Dick Lewis was captured by the Indians and tied to a stake to be burned and tortured, Old Bob Kelly, disguised in the regalia of the tribe's medicine man, set him free by throwing tomahawks, ostensibly at Dick but really at the buckskin thongs binding him to the post? He threw them so skillfully that the thongs were cut and Dick dashed away to freedom. Why, "bars and buffler", of course you remember *that!*

Well, in our house, even on a Sunday morning, those books were permissible reading and they helped a great deal. Aunt Mary's disgusted inquiry: "Why on earth don't you read something improving and useful instead of that trash?" skimmed unnoticed by my bowed head. Mother did not often interfere with my choice of literature; she understood.

There were homes in that town though, plenty of them, where the reading of novels or stories was strictly forbidden on the Sabbath. Where even the placid adventures of "Rollo" were taboo except on weekdays. The boys and girls in those homes grew up to be paragons of piety and virtue, I suppose. At any rate, I hope they did.

And then, in the middle of the exciting chapter when sixteen-year-old Frank Nelson—as we look back at him now he does seem to have been a bit precocious—was defying the burly chief of the robber band to do his worst, a superfluous bit of bravado, because that particular robber never was known to do anything else—then came the call. Frank must be left in the middle of his defiance and the bandit with the bowie knife in his sinewy right fist. It was a quarter to eleven—go-to-meeting time.

It was very quiet along the main road. Not that the road was noisy even on a weekday, but on Sundays the hush was, to juvenile ears, almost painful. Grownups talked in subdued tones and youth was not encouraged to talk at all. Occasionally a front gate opened to emit another group of churchgoers, the adults all in their best bibs and tuckers and, apparently, satisfied to be so, and the children—the boys, at least—as outwardly grand and inwardly rebellious as you were. Occasionally also a buggy or carryall passed at a decorous speed, bearing the more affluent, those financially able to keep a “horse-and-team”, and the drivers and passengers in those vehicles were as stiffly sedate as the footfarers. Ahead, around the bend beyond the general store and post-office, now tightly closed and shuttered, the church bell was ringing. No church bell in these modern times rings with such a commanding clang. I am sure of that.

The old First Meeting-House—the particular church we are talking about just now—stood and still stands on a little rise. Tall elms and silver-leaf poplars shaded

it. There were granite steps and a brick path to the wide platform before its doors. Painted white, of course, the blinds of its high, pointed windows green. Simply dignified, without architectural frills and needing none. The second church building on its site since the society was formed in 1700, the original meeting-house having been burned in 1820, or thereabouts.

Your family group climbed the granite steps. Other groups were ahead and behind you. The sheds at the right rear of the meeting-house were filled with horses and carriages and more were picketed on the lawn. Boys and girls of your acquaintance passed you, comrades that on a weekday you would have hailed with gleeful shouts and nicknames; now surreptitious winks were the only greetings. On the platform grownups sedately shook hands or nodded a good morning.

Inside the church the Sunday quiet was intensified. And the Sunday smells — smells of — of — it is hard to identify them at this distance, but they were there. A faint musty odor from the pew cushions and carpets, a whiff of cologne from Aunt Mary's handkerchief, a hint of camphor from a wrap laid away for safe keeping until fall and just taken out of the closet, and — and — yes, in early summer, the sweet scent of lilacs blown in through the open windows. Those smells are a part of the memories of those Sunday mornings.

The pew backs were hard and very straight up and down, and the carpet-covered footrests an irritation. In order for our short legs to reach them, we children had to move forward to the very edge of the seat and then there was nothing to rest our heads against. And if we

did move back and our heads were supported, our knees were unbendable, and our Sunday shoes stuck out rigidly into space. But then, as Grandmother explained to me on one occasion, "Folks don't go to meeting to be comfortable."

People were coming in all the time. On tiptoe, of course; and boots squeaked and gowns rustled. Captain Elisha Hamlin and wife moved grandly up the aisle. The captain's white chin-whisker bristled above his high collar and black stock, and he carried his gold-headed cane in one hand and his tall hat in the other. The cane had been presented to him by the owners of a bark wrecked and abandoned in the Indian Ocean. The officers and crew of that bark had taken to the boats and were picked up and brought into Calcutta by Captain Hamlin's ship, the *Fair Rover*.

With Captain Elisha and his wife was Miss Octavia Lathrop, Mrs. Hamlin's sister. Miss Octavia was tall, broad in the beam and proud of her family name; she and her sister were granddaughters of Captain Darius Lathrop, who made a fortune privateering in the War of 1812. She was president of the Sewing Society, a director of the Ladies' Select Circulating Library, and her life was devoted to missions and good works, so much so that she was inclined to be absent-minded and neglectful in worldly matters. She had electrified the congregation on one occasion by coming into church late and marching up the aisle to the Hamlin pew with her bonnet on backwards — "stern to", as old Caleb Godfrey, the sexton, described it.

Captain and Mrs. Jonathan Souther and the three young

Southers followed the Hamlins. It was Captain Jonathan's ship, the *Open Water*, that was captured and burned by the *Alabama* during the late war between the States. Mrs. Souther, Senior, Jonathan's mother, came in a moment later. She was a placid, white-haired old lady, and it was hard to realize that, in her young married days, she had loaded the muskets while her husband and the first mate, besieged in the deckhouse of their vessel in the mid-Pacific, had fought off and conquered a mutinous crew. Brought the ship safely into port afterwards, they did, and the surviving leaders of the mutiny were tried and convicted. It sounds romantic and far from reality now, but, as I remember, it was not accounted so very remarkable then. There was scarcely a pew in that old meeting-house at that period that did not contain some man or woman who could, if he or she wished, have told a tale of sea adventure almost as thrilling.

There was Captain Eben Bailey, white-haired, venerable, gentle, who, when but eleven years old, was cabin boy aboard what was undoubtedly the last American vessel ever taken by pirates in American waters. His story has been printed before, so I shall not repeat it now. One incident, however, I cannot bear to omit. The little eleven-year-old boy—think of it, you mothers of eleven-year-old sons—had saved his pennies and, in Havana, had bought for a present to bring home to *his* mother, in far-off Cape Cod, a tiny shell-covered basket. When the pirates boarded the vessel, little Eben ran below, secured the basket from the bottom of his sea chest and

hid it under the mattress of his berth. Whatever happened to him or the rest of his belongings, that present for Mother should be safe. Touching, isn't it? And sentimental—of course. But even in these times, when sentiment is a mid-Victorian pest to be avoided like the smallpox by all careful writers, I will risk so much for little Eben.

He had a long seafaring career after that. He carried, aboard one of his ships, the first American consul to Australia. They became friends during the voyage and, when the consul decided to remain permanently in Australia, to become a citizen of that country, he and Captain Bailey kept up a correspondence till the day of his, the ex-consul's, death.

And in the second pew from the front at the left was Captain—but what is the use? In that meeting-house were at least twenty captains, most of them, of course, retired from active service, although occasionally the Sunday gathering was augmented by the presence of some younger skipper, home on shore leave after a long voyage, and proudly accompanied by his wife and children, who were desirous of “showing him off” to their friends and neighbors. Then there was much handshaking on the platform before and after meeting and much envy next day among the younger generation, when his boys and girls exhibited the gifts he had brought them from foreign ports.

If I really get going on this “captain” subject I never know when to stop, so perhaps it may be better to drop it now and mention some of the non-seagoing members

of the congregation. There was Miss Emeline Bascom, for instance. Not that Emeline was a prominent or influential member. She was not even one of our "best people", aristocratically speaking, although she would have dearly loved to be and attended the First Church in order to be, once a week at least, gathered with the socially elect. Emeline's ambition was to be "genteel." She spoke with prim elegance, her conversation liberally sprinkled with quotations and flowery phrases from books she had read, and many of her remarks were the basis of household stories in our town.

One of them was of her visit to a relative in a neighboring village, perhaps seven or eight miles distant. Emeline visited there for a fortnight and, on her return, delighted her neighbors by declaring that it did seem so refreshing to breathe her native air again.

Another was of her trip to Boston, where she had spent a day in one of the new department stores.

"Tired?" she was reported as saying. "No, not a single mite. You don't have to climb stairs in that great place. You ride up and down in the cultivators."

Caleb Godfrey, the sexton, was, to us boys at least, an interesting character. He it was who had charge of the meeting-house, weekdays as well as Sundays. When, on the night before the Fourth of July, daredevil spirits among the younger generation laid plans for the ringing of the church bell, it was Caleb whose vigilance was supposed to prevent the carrying of those plans into effect. Considering that the key to the meeting-house always hung on a nail in the hollow of the old elm by the side



THURSDAY NIGHT PRAYER MEETING

door of the parsonage, and that every youth in the village knew it was there, circumvention of Mr. Godfrey's watchfulness was not a difficult matter. As I remember it, the bell was invariably rung and, throughout the glorious Fourth, it was a part of the celebration to gloat over our triumph in securing that key. Caleb's grim threats concerning what he would do to the rascals if they tried it next year merely sweetened the gloating.

But now, as I look back at it, I am inclined to doubt. Mr. Godfrey was a kindly old man. Mr. Ames, the minister, was a tolerant soul, and even the dour old captains, some of them, were, I suspect, not as rigidly dour as we considered them then. They had been boys once; it is quite possible that they, in their time, had tiptoed, giggling and whispering, up the stairs to that same belfry. It may be that that key was purposely permitted to hang in the hollow of the elm on the glorious night. It could have been taken into the parsonage so easily. . . . But it wasn't.

At any rate, Mr. Godfrey, although he threatened a great deal, did the most of his threatening after the event. He was not like the constable in a neighboring town, who spent the night roaming the streets in search of juvenile rioters and bell ringers. As he always carried a lantern in his prowlings, the search was not as successful as it might otherwise have been. On one occasion the disturbers of the peace tied a fishline to the bell clapper, threw the other end of the line out of the belfry window to the ground, and rang the bell from a clump of bushes at the edge of the meeting-house property. Then, when

the irate constable puffingly climbed the stairs to catch the young scamps in the act, they crept up behind him and locked the door. He spent the remainder of the night in the lower room of the belfry, with the bell banging joyfully above his head.

Of the church service I remember little — that is, little which we youngsters were supposed to remember. There is a clearly vivid picture of the Reverend Mr. Ames standing behind the fine mahogany pulpit, his long white hair framing his clean-shaven, kindly old face. Another of the choir, in the gallery at the rear of the meeting-house — the congregation turned to face them when they sang. Of the collection box being passed and our donations of the pennies which we would far rather have spent for “jaw breakers” at the little store opposite the schoolhouse.

These I remember, of course. But far more clearly the other things. In early summer the bluebird singing in the silver-leaf tree outside the open window. The peppermint lozenge Aunt Mary occasionally slipped me during the age-long sermon. Of surreptitious glances over my shoulder at the clock hung at the middle of the gallery rail. Captain Elkanah Davis had presented that clock to the meeting-house and it is going yet, whereas Captain Elkanah ceased to go sixty years ago. A fine old clock, handsome and dignified, and, so they say, still a good timekeeper, although during my early acquaintance with it I would have sworn its ticks measured weeks instead of seconds.

Mr. Ames’ sermons are what should be remembered, but are not. They were discussed at home later on, dur-

ing dinner, but I was far more interested in the dinner itself. Mr. Ames is remembered, however, and the memory is a pleasant one. I am not quite certain what a gentleman of the old school may be, for the examples offered in stories and novels seem to differ oddly, but I should say that he was one. Courteous, genial, a friend to everyone, no matter whether a member of his congregation or not. He had occupied that pulpit for many years and did occupy it until the Sunday before his death. A good man, if ever there was one.

There were stories told about him, of course. He must have been most naively innocent in wordly matters. On one occasion he dropped in unexpectedly for dinner at the Hamlin home. Mrs. Hamlin was somewhat taken aback, for he was a strict teetotaler, and the dessert for that meal was to be a pudding with a wine sauce. It was, however, too late to change, so, in due course, or when the time for its appearance came, the pudding was served. Mr. Ames ate his portion with apparent relish. Then he accepted his hostess' invitation for a second helping.

"That sauce," he said, with a beaming smile, "is, I think, the most delicious I ever tasted. I wish, Mrs. Hamlin, you would give me the recipe. I am sure Mrs. Ames would like it as well as I do."

Mrs. Hamlin "forgot" to give the recipe, of course, and neither she, nor her husband, told the story until after Mr. Ames' death. Then she did and it has been often told since.

"Times do change and that's a fact." Grandmother used to say that, when recalling some of the happenings of her

earlier days. She used often to speak of "Parson Simpson" who preached from the First Meeting-House pulpit in the 20's and 30's and 40's, preached from it for forty-five years or thereabouts. In Grandmother's youth practically every home in town had a "parson's closet." The parson's closet in Grandmother's father's home opened from the best parlor beside the big fireplace. In it were kept tall glasses, spoons, and a decanter of New England rum.

In winter weather, when Parson Simpson visited the house on his round of pastoral calls, he was always seated in the wing chair by the fireplace. The kettle was steaming on the hob. The tall glasses and the decanter and the spoons were brought out, and the sugar and lemons from the pantry — the "buttery" Grandmother always called it. There are butteries still in old England. In New England they have all become "pantries", we suppose; at least, we have not heard the other term used for a long time.

Great-grandfather mixed two hot toddies, one for himself and one for the minister. They sipped them and talked of matters godly and worldly. I remember, in Grandmother's later years, mentioning to her a point that had puzzled me a bit.

"Grandmother," I asked, "was the parson *always* given a hot rum toddy at the houses where he called?"

"In winter time and in houses that amounted to anything he was — yes. It was the custom then."

"Did he make many calls — the same day?"

"Oh, yes — a good many. He had a big congregation. Everybody went to meeting, everybody that was halfway respectable."

"But — but — if he drank a toddy at every house, and if he made many calls, I should think he must have been — er — rather genial toward the last of his round."

Grandmother nodded. "Why, yes," she said gravely, "sometimes he was, a little mite; but nobody thought anything of it. And he was a fine man, don't make any mistake about that. Times have changed, that's all."

They have, haven't they?

Another of her reminiscences was of the Tidditt family who, when she was a girl, lived at the west end of the town, a good two miles from the meeting-house.

"Abner Tidditt," said Grandmother, "was a good man, a hard-working, honest, religious man; but, in those days, he was pretty poor and he and his wife had a big family of children. To feed all those children and provide clothes for them kept Abner's nose close to the grindstone. He and his wife and the young ones never missed a Sunday-morning service, though — unless they were snowed in, or something like that.

"Every Sunday morning in summer you could see them coming, the whole string of them. They walked all the way, and the children were barefoot and carrying their shoes and stockings in their hands. When they got near the meeting-house, the children sat down by the side of the road, put on their shoes and stockings, and then the family filed in and up the aisle. Shoe leather was expensive and the Tidditts couldn't afford to wear theirs out by walking two miles in warm weather. But they came to meeting just the same, and everybody respected them for it. Money isn't the only thing that brings respect

in this world, although a lot of folks nowadays seem to figure that it is."

The old First Meeting-House was not the only place of worship in our town. There were others, but in my boyhood I knew them not at all intimately. Their exteriors were, of course, familiar enough, but until I was at least ten years old, I cannot remember ever having been inside of one of them during a service. Creeds were rigid in those days and for a Unitarian to attend, even casually, a service in — say, the Methodist church, would have been considered more than a social error. Unitarians, even then, took pride in speaking of themselves as liberals, but there were limits to their liberality. And, on the other hand, for a Methodist to pass the portals of a Unitarian meeting-house, even on the occasion of a church "sociable", would have been counted a fall from grace entailing dire consequences, here and hereafter. The Universalists were liberal also, but the Unitarians did not fellowship with them. Universalists were said not to believe in hell. That let *them* out. Even in secular affairs the lines were, to some extent, drawn. The clergymen spoke to each other when they met, but they did not fraternize.

And yet, in that same town a few years ago, I watched a baseball game where the pitcher was the Methodist minister, second base was taken care of by the Unitarian minister, the Baptist parson played at third and the umpire was the Catholic priest. And they tell me there is a ministers' club, which meets once a week.

Yes, indeed, times have — but we won't say that again. Later on, and in another town, the author was for a

time a more or less regular attendant at Friday evening prayer meeting in one of the old meeting-houses. The reason for his attendance was an entirely personal one and — perhaps he should be ashamed to confess it — was not prompted by any strong consciousness of sin or desire to lead a better life. There was a girl there who — but why say more?

The congregation in those prayer meetings was vastly different from that in the old First Church. This particular town did not number as many “square-rigged” captains among its inhabitants. The flavor was as strongly nautical, however. Most of the men present earned their living on or about salt water. They commanded cod or mackerel schooners, went “day fishing” to the shoals in their catboats, or tended lobster pots or fish weirs.

The meetings began with singing and the choice of hymns was left to the preference of the congregation. The choices were characteristic. One of the favorites began:

Brightly beams our Father's mercy
From his lighthouse ever more,
But to us He gives the keeping
Of the lights along the shore.

And another, called for over and over again, began:

“Land ahead! Its fruits are waving.”

And concluded with:

Drop the anchor, furl the sail.
We are safe within the vale.

We, of the irreverent younger generation in the back seats, could repeat from memory some of the phrases used by certain devout worshipers when they rose to give their "experiences." Old Ezra Peele, for example, invariably referred to the heavenly "caravan." He punctuated his "experience" with "Ah's."

"Oh, — ah — I beg, take us into Thy caravan — ah."

Ezra may or may not have known what a caravan really was, but he was a kindly, honest old soul and everyone liked him. In the summer months he sold ice-cream in his little "notion store" on the back road. On one occasion he is said to have addressed customers in this way:

"Which'll you have — lamon or vanilly? I'm all out of lamon."

They took vanilla.





I've Been Up to Boston City



AND Boston City was a long way off. In actual mileage, of course, not very much longer than it is today, but still a little, for the old "down the Cape" road wound and twisted, curving and dipping and rising, passing through hamlets and villages which the modern main highway avoids. Even the trains of the Old Colony Railroad, which our grandparents considered lightning transportation, stopped in a dozen spots where there were stations then but where there are none now. Perhaps you can remember some of them — Parker's Mills and South Middleboro and Rock — and many more.

A trip to Boston was, in the author's boyhood, a journey to make ready for and talk about weeks in advance. It

was invariably made sometime during the winter months and was to last two whole weeks. We were to visit various groups of city relatives who, in turn, were to visit us the following summer, as they always did. Not that there was any ledger account opened, with visits charged and credited; it was just a custom, that was all.

On the morning of the day of departure, we were up early. We had to be, for the train left at six-thirty or thereabouts. I remember yet those breakfasts by lamp-light, the gray dawn outside, the arrival of the "depot wagon", the ride to the depot — possibly some Cape Codders may have spoken of it as the "station", but I can't remember ever hearing one do so — the purchase of tickets in the stuffy little waiting room; the whistle of the train in the distance and the thrill which the sound gave us, the roaring and rattling as the engine stopped beside the platform. Locomotives were not numbered in those days; they were named and the name was printed beneath the window of the engineer's cab. Every boy in town knew those names by heart — "Highland Light" and "Dexter" and — and — I seem to have forgotten the others. We all knew them then, you may be sure.

Then the long ride to Boston. The train man who sold "Jessup's candy." Do you remember "Jessup's candy"? It was five cents a stick, each stick rolled in waxed paper, and there were all sorts of flavors, vanilla and lemon and chocolate and peppermint and wintergreen — no, checkerberry, I think they called it, at least we youngsters never called it anything else. And, oh, yes, sassafras. Sassafras was fine — we liked sassafras.

Jessup's candy had the virtue of "lasting long." With care, and by not taking too big bites, you could make a stick of it last almost to Cohasset Narrows. Surely you know where Cohasset Narrows is. Yes, they do call it Buzzards Bay now.

And, eventually, that train rolled into the Old Colony depot on Kneeland Street in Boston. I wish I had one of the old timetables, for it would be interesting to know just how many hours and minutes it took to get there, even if the train were on time — which it seldom was, as I remember. It seems as if it was almost noon when we arrived, but that may be an exaggeration.

And now, the Cape Codder and his wife breakfast in their own dining-room, board their automobile, reach Boston shortly after the stores open, do their shopping and are back home again early in the evening. And the city man, coming down for the week-end, makes the trip in two and a half hours, provided his summer residence is no farther than — say, Orleans or Chatham. If he lives in Truro or Provincetown, it takes him a little longer, of course, but it is an easy trip.

Yes, distance does not count for much in these times of ours.

On the calendar of the Cape Codder of yesterday there were several red-letter days in which the Old Colony Railroad played its part. One was "Camp-Meeting Sunday", when excursion trains ran to and from the camp grounds at Yarmouth. The Yarmouth camp meetings lasted a week and the devout of the Methodist persuasion opened and occupied the little cottages on the grounds

and remained there during the entire session, attending the afternoon and evening services in the big tents or in the open air, meeting friends and acquaintances from all over the county, fraternizing, gossiping, feasting, flirting and worshiping. The older element did not flirt, of course, but probably no one will deny that, for the youth of both sexes, Camp-Meeting Week provided a glorious opportunity to get acquainted.

The camp-meeting cottage was, so far as architecture is concerned, unique unto itself. Tiny, very narrow, with a high-pitched roof and pointed windows which were miniature copies of those in a church. Occasionally along the Cape roads one may now see one of those cottages and there is never any question as to whence it came. Originally it was a "camp-meeting house" and was moved to its present location from the camp ground.

The climax of Camp-Meeting Week was Camp-Meeting Sunday and it was on that day that the Old Colony Railroad ran its excursion trains. And, if the day were clear and fair, those trains were crowded. The camp ground was thronged with a gay crowd. There were restaurant tents and booths for the sale of candy and fruit and "tonic"; to a Codder it is quite unnecessary to explain that "tonic" is ginger ale, or sarsaparilla or root beer — any sort of "soft drink." Before the fruit booths were great stacks of watermelons. Personally, I cannot think of Camp-Meeting Sunday without thinking of watermelons.

The crowd moved up and down, stopping occasionally to listen to the preaching, or to join in the singing of

Moody and Sankey hymns, or to sample the sandwiches and oyster stews or the candy or watermelons or tonic. When the locomotive whistle sounded, they hurried to board the excursion trains, one heading up the Cape and one down. A great day, Camp-Meeting Sunday, appealing to soul and body.

Another red-letter day — or days, for there were three of them — came early in October, when the County Cattle Show and Fair was held at Barnstable. For the past year or two there has been no County Fair; the attendance was so small and the financial loss so great that the yearly festival has been abandoned. The date was moved from October to August, the idea being to attract the summer resident and visitor; but even that, although the attendance picked up for a time, could not save the Fair for us. People said that one year's show was just like the preceding one, and there were so many other more interesting things to do that going to the Fair ceased to be a custom.

It seems strange and almost unbelievable. No Barnstable County Cattle Show and Fair? Why, it was as much a part of Cape Cod's yesterdays as Fourth of July and quite as exciting. The Old Colony ran its excursion trains on each of the three days and our family bought tickets weeks in advance. During its later years, I never heard it called anything but the Fair, or the Barnstable Fair, but fifty years ago it was, in our town at least, invariably spoken of as "The Cattle Show."

"Goin' to the Cattle Show?" one youngster asked another.

“ ’Course I am. We’re all goin’. What kind of folks do you think we are?”

The first excursion upon which I went “on my own”, unaccompanied by Mother or Aunt Mary or any grownup, was to the Cattle Show. A half dozen boys from our town went together and, for my part, I was given just so much spending money and was cautioned, over and over again, to be sure and put the “return” half of my round-trip ticket where I could not lose it.

That was a great day, a wonderful day. We saw practically everything there was to see and came home penniless and exhausted, but happy. And now there is no “Cattle Show and Fair” for our grandchildren to go to. And, in all probability, they would not be greatly thrilled by it if there were. Puppet shows and moving pictures and an occasional circus with three rings and two stages supply them with thrills sufficient. What is the younger generation coming to? We do not know, but we should feel more discouraged about its prospects if we had not heard our grandmothers ask that same question when we were little.

Perhaps — yes, undoubtedly — the reddest of all the red-letter days on the Old Colony’s calendar was “Stockholders’ Day.” That day appealed to practically every adult on the Cape. It was — or I seem to remember that it was — the day of the annual meeting in Boston of Old Colony share-owners, and to every holder of a share of its stock the Old Colony provided a free ride to and from the metropolis.

Of course, you can see what that meant. As the rail-

road extended its line down the Cape, continuing on from Sandwich to Yarmouth and, finally, from Yarmouth through to Provincetown, residents of the towns through or near which the tracks were to be laid were solicited to buy railroad stock. And a great many of them did so, the well-to-do buying several shares, the less prosperous buying two or one. Consequently, there were a good many shareholders in each town.

And on Stockholders' Day, as the railroad announced, your certificate was your ticket. If you owned twenty shares, or one share, of Old Colony stock, you could on that day travel from your home town to Boston and return, without the transportation costing you a penny. You were invited so to travel. And did the Cape accept that invitation? It did.

Aunt Mary had been saying that she must do some shopping soon, but she guessed she might as well put it off until Stockholders' Day. Great-uncle Jonathan, across the road, had some business to attend to in the city and he, too, figured that Stockholders' Day was as good a time as any to do it in. Mr. Howes, who kept the largest general store, and Captain Bailey, who kept the little shop opposite the schoolhouse — the place where we youngsters used to buy stick candy during the forenoon recess — were going. So, too, were Captain Snow and his wife, and the Hamlins and the Southers and — oh, almost everyone who owned a certificate. People like the Hamlins and the Southers could, of course, perfectly well afford to pay their fare, but that did not make any difference. Why pay when an opportunity was offered to ride without pay-

ing? It was true that the long trains were sure to be frightfully crowded and that there would be discomfort and inconvenience, but a penny saved was a penny earned. This was thrifty New England.

Those who did not own shares tried to borrow the certificates of those who did. There were, of course, some shareholders who were prevented, by illness or some other reason, from using them, and their certificates were in demand. If Mrs. Sarah Dabney could not go, then Mr. Cyrenus Small traveled on her certificate and nobody knew the difference — or, if they did, nobody cared. The Old Colony conductors were too busy on Stockholders' Day to be fussy over questions of sex or identity.

If we had any errands to do in the big city, Stockholders' Day was the time to do those errands. If there were no errands, then go just for the sake of going — that was the idea.

Mr. Godfrey met Mr. Crowell at the post-office.

"Goin' up to Boston Stockholders' Day?" asked the former.

"Ya-as," mournfully, "I'm goin'. And, heavens and earth, how I hate to think of it! All that crowd and all!"

"Got somethin' 'special to go for?"

"No."

"Then why do you go?"

"Eh?" indignantly. "Sam Taylor says he'll lend me his certificate, if I want it. *Got* to go, ain't I?"

It may be — I have forgotten — that the actual certificate was not used. It may be that some form of pass was issued by the railroad to the shareholders on its list. That

makes no difference. The fact remains that, on Stockholders' Day, a goodly proportion of Cape Cod's population went to Boston and came home again "free gratis for nothing."

When the New York, New Haven and Hartford leased the Old Colony, that ended Stockholders' Day and its privileges. But it was one of Cape Cod's great days — while it lasted.

The motorcar is a comparatively recent invention, but then, counting by lifetimes, so is the railway — for Cape Cod. Many of us can easily remember when the branch railroad to Chatham was built. Before that, you left the train at Harwich and finished your journey by stage.

And our fathers and mothers, in their younger married days, did all their traveling by stage. Or, perhaps, in certain localities and on certain occasions, by packet. But we are not talking about the packet just yet.

So many stories, family stories, were told about the old stagecoaches. As I remember — one can't be certain and, as you were warned at the beginning, exact figures are taboo in this book — the journey from Boston to our own Cape town lasted three days by stage, or perhaps two and a half. Later, when the railway was built as far as Yarmouth, passengers for "down the Cape" came on by stage from there.

One story, told over and over again by juvenile request, was of one of those Yarmouth-to-our-town journeys. Father and Mother had been away at sea. Father was a sea captain, of course — "of course", because practically all men in that particular town at that time were sea cap-

tains, either active or retired. There were a few exceptions, like the storekeeper and the doctor and the ministers and longshoremen and fishermen, but the great majority of male householders either commanded square-rigged vessels or had commanded them. Mother used to say that, when she was a girl, a young fellow who did not, after he left school, go to sea with the idea of commanding a ship by the time he became of age was regarded as lacking ambition.

And now the Cape Codders who follow the sea — for foreign voyages, that is — may be counted on one's fingers. The answer is simple — there are no sailing ships. Steamers — oh, yes, but commanding a steamer in these days of cables and wireless is quite a different thing from setting sail from Boston or New York or Philadelphia, to remain out of touch with home and owners for goodness knew how long. To command a great liner making scheduled time from New York to Southampton is a great responsibility; but, as I heard an old retired deep-sea captain say once, "After all, that's just ferrying."

But we have wandered away from our stagecoach story. Father had been away on a long voyage and Mother had accompanied him, just as so very many Cape Cod wives of that and earlier periods sailed with their husbands. She used to say, "After all, unless you were contented to be with him for a few weeks every two or three years, it was the only thing you could do." The ship was in port at Boston and Mother and Father were on their way to the Cape Cod home and the dear ones and friends they had not seen for many months.

They had traveled by train as far as Yarmouth and there boarded the stagecoach for the final fifteen miles of their journey. It was night and it was winter. More than that, a howling northeast snowstorm was raging. The roads, not good ones at the very best, were piled with drifts, and the howling gale flung the snow against the coach windows, buffeted the laboring horses and half blinded the muffled and ear-lapped driver on the unprotected front seat.

They were the only passengers that night. On the baggage rack at the rear of the coach were their trunks, one of them packed with gifts brought from overseas. Presents for Grandmother and Grandfather, for nieces and cousins, young or older.

After hours of rocking and rolling, hanging in drifts and bumping through infrequent levels, pausing at post-offices to drop mailbags, and ploughing and rocking and wallowing on again, at last the steaming, panting horses stopped by the gate in the picket fence before our house. The driver, plastered with snow, and with his beard and eyebrows hung with icicles, opened the coach door.

"Here you be," he said grimly. "Part of ye, anyhow."

"Part of us?" queried Father. "What do you mean by that?"

"What I said. Looks as if we'd lost one of your trunks overboard somewheres along the road. Too bad, ain't it?"

It was at least too bad, particularly as the missing trunk happened to be the one containing the presents for the home folks. However, the loss was not a permanent one.

An early-rising Dennis citizen found the trunk next morning, upside down in a drift and half buried in snow which had fallen since it broke from its lashings. It was tagged and labeled, so he hailed the stagecoach on its next trip and it was delivered the following evening.

This is but one of the yarns dealing with Cape Cod stagecoaching in the old days. There were tales of the old taverns along the way; of rooms and beds good, bad and indifferent; of food bad, indifferent and good. Of the old tavern keepers, well-known characters most of them, and of the drivers who, no matter how lazily they had permitted the horses to plod along between towns, invariably whipped up just before reaching a post-office or a tavern and dashed up to the hitching posts in dust and glory.

Most of the taverns and all the down-the-Cape stages were things of the past when we were young. The railroad had put them out of business, of course. But it was not until 1887 that the coaches ceased carrying passengers between Harwich and Chatham, and we have ridden in those coaches many and many a time.

The thought brings so many pictures. Of the old Chatham main road — please remember there were no Cape “streets” then — its clamshell surface gleaming white in the summer sunshine, the elms and silver-leaf poplars bordering it, the tailor’s shop and the shoemaker’s shop and the “Billiard and Pool and Sipio Parlor” — I hope you know what sort of a game “sipio” was, because I don’t — the barber’s shop at the corner of the lane leading to the shore, and the store and post-office opposite, and, a hundred yards or so this side of the post-office,

the old stage tavern. Was it the "Ocean House"? It seems to me that it was.

A July or August noon. The crowd on the post-office platform waiting for the mail and talking of the fishing, or of politics, or of town affairs. The horses, attached to buggies or carryalls or two-seaters, dozing between the shafts. A few summer boarders, the young ladies with their hair "banged" and wearing tight-fitting jerseys and straw sailor hats; the young gentlemen proudly conspicuous in striped tennis "blazers" with caps to match and, the lucky ones, girded with black satin sashes with fringed ends. Those sashes were made for their wearers by devoted feminine friends, and the longer and heavier the fringe, the deeper the affection prompting the gift.

Then the sound of hoofs and the rattle of wheels around the bend beyond the Ocean House. The stagecoach is coming and here it is. Four horses, trotting under protest; the driver — "Whit" or "Sim", whichever it happened to be; one drove the up stage and one the down — on the box, reins in one hand and whip in the other; mailbags piled on the roof and baggage on the rack behind; passengers peering from the windows, to be welcomed by shouts from their friends or hosts in the crowd. A great event — yes, indeed. And one which, although it happened at noon and again at evening every day in the year except Sunday, never lost its glamour.

My memories of rides in those old stages are just as keen. My native town was, perhaps, ten miles from Chatham in a straight line, about a fifteen-minute jog in a motorcar nowadays; but then, by rail and stagecoach, it was almost a day's journey. We had relatives in Chatham

and, occasionally, I was permitted to visit them for a happy week at a stretch.

Mother or Aunt Mary or someone saw me safely on board the train at our depot. By that train I was carried to Harwich. The depot master at Harwich was one of our numerous second or third cousins. His Christian name was Barzilla, good old-fashioned Cape Cod name, that. His duty it was to take charge of me until six o'clock or so in the afternoon, when the down train was *supposed*—you will notice the emphasis on “supposed”—to arrive. Then I was ready for further shipment, by coach, to my destination.

Looking back at them, it would seem as if that day of waiting must have seemed endless to a small boy. And yet I can't remember that it did seem so. A railway station, with freight cars on the siding and an occasional handcar passing, was so wonderfully thrilling of itself. Then there was the going home to dinner with Cousin Barzilla and being royally stuffed and petted by Mrs. Barzilla and the family. Then the return to the depot—we must remember to call it “depot”—and more wonders and thrills there. In case one should, in spite of that dinner, be hungry about four o'clock, there were various tempting heaps of mince and apple “turnovers” for sale on the counter in the depot. They were supposed to be protected by the glass covers from dust and flies and if, occasionally, one of those covers had not been replaced since the attentions of the latest customer, that made the turnovers not the least bit less tempting or delicious. Nowadays, we may shudder when we think



THE OLD CHATHAM-HARWICH STAGE

of it, but that was a long, long way from nowadays. Altogether too long.

And, at last, after the evening train had come and gone, after the Chatham mailbag or bags had been hoisted to the coach roof, and the trunks, if any, strapped on the rack astern, you and the other passengers climbed into the black, stuffy interior, Whit or Sim mounted the box, the whip cracked. "Git dap, you!" And you were off.

On one occasion the writer was the only passenger. Winter it was, dark at six o'clock, and cold. Cousin Barzilla had put me on the middle seat of the coach, probably because it was the nearest to the door. This was, from my viewpoint, a mistake, because that seat had only a wide leather strap for a back rest and, although it would have supported the back of a grown person, it hit me in the head. My back had no support at all and, with every jolt of the coach, my neck seemed to be in danger of snapping.

That was a ride! Lonely and dark and chill. Yes, and smelly. The leather strap and the seat coverings smelled; and the straw on the floor—if your legs were long enough you were supposed to bury your feet in it to keep them warm—had its own smell. The coach, bouncing in the ruts, careened like a boat in a rough sea, and tossed me hither and yon. And, from the driver's seat, floated snatches of melody as "Whit" solaced his soul with song.

"I've been up to Boston City,
All the gals they looked so pretty,
Pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty —"

And so on. He sang it over and over again. After a while I should have enjoyed a change. The Chatham house and the welcome and the supper and the lights and warmth were relished when I reached them — especially the lights and warmth.

“Whit” and “Sim.” They were personages in the Chatham of those days. Both, as I recall, plump and bearded and florid, both jolly and ready with jokes and repartee. All sorts of stories were told of them. Here is one.

They say — this author generally prefaces a story with a “they say”, because it shifts responsibility — they say that, one summer day, Whit had a passenger who had never before visited the Cape. He was not, strictly speaking, a commercial salesman, a “drummer”, but a sort of book agent; that is, he was canvassing for one of those publishing schemes which involve the issuing of a two or three-volume set of “Prominent Citizens of Barnstable County, Their Biographies and Their Homes.” The “prominent citizen” supplies a photograph of himself and one of his “charming residence”, the important facts concerning his life and a substantial sum of money. The publishers do the rest.

This particular canvasser insisted upon sitting on the driver’s seat beside Whit and he asked many questions during the ride. “The best people” were what he was especially interested in. In what section would he find the best people of the town. He asked and repeated and asked again. At last Whit pulled his horses into a walk and pointed.

"There," he said. "There's more of the best folks there than anywheres else I know of."

He was pointing to the cemetery.

There were plenty of good people alive in that neighborhood then; there are just as many now. But when we remember Cape Codders of bygone days, men and women we knew and respected and loved — when we read the names on the headstones in the cemetery, it seems almost as if what Whit said then was true now.

Ah, hum! And to think that there was a time when one enjoyed birthdays.





The Packet's In



THERE used to be another way of going to and coming from the city. I hinted at it in the preceding chapter and said we would not talk about it there. Even now we probably shall not talk at length, as we did about the stagecoach, for stagecoaches survived until our day, whereas the last packet made its last trip years before any of us were born. To our parents, it was a memory of their youth; to our grandparents, it was a regular and frequently used means of transportation.

There were, so we are given to understand, a number of packets in the earlier half of the last century. Packets from Barnstable to Boston, and Dennis to Boston, and

Yarmouth to Boston — these and more, hailing from the towns on the North Shore of the Cape; and from the South Shore ports at least one which carried passengers and cargo to and from New Bedford. The writer knows very little about these; no tales concerning them were part of his juvenile entertainment. But of one packet, the little schooner which sailed from our own town to and from the big city, we were told a little.

It sounded far off and primitive even then and to our childish ears. The idea of going down to the shore, to the beach where we “went in swimming” at high tide in summer time, of driving down to that beach, with bags and trunks, just as if we were on the way to the depot to take a train, and there find a sailing vessel, a schooner, waiting to carry us to the metropolis — why, it scarcely seemed as if it could be real. As if anyone even really did it.

But many did. Perhaps it was cheaper than going by stage; perhaps some of our seadogs, retired or in active service, and their seagoing wives and salt-seasoned families may have actually preferred it to travel over land. And some of the trips must have been fairly short and, in good weather, pleasant. But think what some of the others must have been.

The tide along our section of the North Shore is what the boys would call a “regular” tide. At flood our beach looks like any other. But at ebb, especially in the seasons of full tides, the water goes back and back until it leaves uncovered two miles of clean white sand, intersected by shallow, weed-bordered channels. Two miles

of clean flats to walk over or ride over in perfect safety — provided you do not linger too long and find yourself caught by the tide on its return. Then those channels, which were so shallow when you waded or rode out through them, will be ever so much deeper, and deepening every minute. So far as I know, there have been no fatalities among those caught by that tide on those flats, but there have been many narrow escapes.

So, with a tide like that, getting a sailing vessel in close to shore and keeping her on an even keel while there, were matters requiring seamanship and planning.

The packet could leave port only at high or on a rising tide, of course. It could come in only at full or nearly full flood. But, when at anchor in port, it must have water enough to keep it afloat, on matter what stage of tide. Little boats — dories, rowboats or “cats” — were left high and dry, lying on their sides. But a schooner, a vessel carrying passengers and freight, could not be so undignified as to spend hours and hours with her masts and deck at an angle.

So they arranged it this way. About a hundred yards from high-tide mark they built a breakwater. This particular breakwater was a long pile of stones — yes, there *are* stones, plenty of them, on the North side of Cape Cod, even though the South-side resident is hard put to it to find one big enough to throw at a neighbor's dog. Always provided, of course, that he is the kind of person who throws stones at dogs.

But the North Shore had many stones, little and big, and boulders, some of them as large as a small cottage.

Not a modern summer cottage, but a — well, say, a camp-meeting cottage, and if you are an old-time Cape Codder, you know how big that is. Those boulders, left by the Ice Age glaciers — for particulars see the other books on Cape Cod — were scattered everywhere. The pine and oak woods were full of them; they dotted the hillsides, showing gray and gaunt amid the huckleberry and bayberry bushes. They were, many of them, split and riven, and the crevices and hollows made wonderful hiding places when you played Indians. Most of them were granite, but there was one, about as big as a wheelbarrow, which was white and glistening quartz. The real Indians, as well as their juvenile imitators of later years, must have known that quartz boulder well, for, in the earth about it, we used to find arrowheads; perfect ones occasionally, but more often partially chipped fragments, failures discarded in the making. I approve of the work of the Massachusetts highway builders, generally speaking, but I do wish they had not carted off and crushed that particular boulder for road material.

The breakwater was made of these stones and rocks, with one large boulder at the end which the builders no doubt accepted as a foundation already laid. I won't trouble to tell you how long or how high it was, for, although crumpled and knocked askew by the drifting ice of many winters, draped with rockweed and partially buried by the shifting sand, the remains of it are still there for you to look at if you care to.

On the lee side of the breakwater, the side nearest the shore, those builders dug a hole as long as the break-

water itself and deep enough to float a small vessel. The incoming tides filled that hole with water and, at ebb, while the sands all about were dry, it remained full. And the packet, moored there, floated serenely, right side up.

A mile or so from the beach and the breakwater, and back of the town itself, is a hill. Cannon Hill they call it even yet. On that hill, in Grandfather's day, was a tall pole with a beacon — an empty barrel it was, so they say — and when the packet came into port, that barrel was hoisted to the top of the pole to remain until she sailed. And on her arrival a cannon was fired from that hill to notify prospective passengers, and those with goods and freight to ship to Boston, that now was the accepted time for reception and delivery of persons and chattels.

What the cargoes were we can only guess. On the outward trips fish, no doubt, and perhaps sea salt from the salt-works then scattered all along the shore. But, homeward bound, the packet carried a varied cargo. Those were the times when Boston was indeed far off and, with winter and its isolation coming on, Cape Cod householders laid in their winter supplies.

In November, Grandfather made a packet trip to and from the city, and while there he bought an assortment of essential foodstuffs sufficient to last a hungry family until spring. Barrels of flour, a small barrel of white sugar and another of brown, a hogshead of molasses — there was no "banting" in those days and the New England diet fairly dripped molasses; "long sweetening" they called it, and they used it on flapjacks and hasty pudding and in pies and cookies and cake and gingerbread — yes, even in tea and coffee.

And, with the flour and sugar and molasses, was a barrel of salt pork, another of corned beef, two or three kits of salt mackerel, firkins of butter — and, as Grandmother used to say when she told us about it, “I don’t know what all.” “There was enough, anyhow,” she used to add. “Your grandpa was a good provider.”

An acquaintance, whose ancestors were Cape Codders, tells of a great-uncle of his who lived in a town five miles from ours. From the “Cap’n’s walk” — that is, the railed platform outside the cupola on the roof of his home — this relative could, through his spyglass, see the barrel when it was hoisted to the top of the pole on Cannon Hill. When he sighted it, he would come down from his “Cap’n’s walk”, go out to the barn, hitch his horse to the truck-wagon, and cart an empty keg over to the packet landing. That keg was there exchanged for another, full of New England rum. The old gentleman would then drive home again, secure in the thought that, so far as the immediate future was concerned, death from thirst was not even a possibility.

Grandmother used to tell, and so, too, did Mother, of trips as passenger in the old packet. They must have been varied in their interests. Sometimes delightful altogether, sometimes partially so, and sometimes altogether otherwise.

A fair day in summer and we can imagine the sail out and across Cape Cod Bay. The sky blue and clear; the yellow and white sand of the beaches shining in the sunshine; the water green, until we cross the outer bar, and then blue with white trimmings; the distant village showing its roofs above the edging of pines and elms, with the

green salt marshes for a foreground; the little schooner heeling a bit in the fresh breeze; the foam at her forefront and in her wake; the stained canvas overhead; neighbors and friends to chat and gossip with. And then, and after not so many hours, the sighting of Boston Light and the sail up the harbor, with the city and its excitements for an ending.

Sounds good, doesn't it? Yes, but let us consider one or two alternatives. Suppose the fresh breeze ceases to be fresh. Suppose it dies out altogether, the blue and white fades from the waves, and the waves flatten out into a stark calm. This does not mean that the sea is altogether flat. Oh, no, there remains a long, greasy, oily ground swell, which lifts the vessel up and slides it down. The sails flap and the cordage squeaks. The tarred ropes smell. The odors from the galley stove drift aft and remain there. The call for dinner is not as enthusiastically welcomed as, perhaps, it should be. And the stuffy little cabin below, where it is served, is — no, we are not hungry — yet.

And then suppose Captain Mayo, or Cahoon or Rogers, or whatever his name is, when questioned concerning the probable length of the calm, shakes his head and observes, "We-ll, I dunno. No signs of nothin' stirrin', far's I can see. 'Less some of you folks whistle for a wind, we're liable to be stuck here all night."

All night! You know what that means. You have seen or had experience of the straw-filled ticks in the berths below. All night? No, thank you. And yet I have heard Grandmother tell of one calm which lasted two whole



THE OLD BREWSTER PACKET LEAVING FOR BOSTON CITY

days and nights. It caught the packet only a few miles off the outer bar on a homeward trip. Think of it! Rocking up and down out there, with the roof of your own house clearly visible, with your own bed and your own table under that roof—and yet as out of reach as the Pearly Gates. Grandmother, when I knew her, was a placid and pious old lady, but—

And, for the other alternative, how about a storm? A howling northeast gale, an “August twister”, descending upon you in the middle of the Bay, with a succession of long beats against a head wind and the more than even chance that the schooner could not “make the tide” and you and your wretched shipmates would have to anchor outside the bar and toss and tumble until the next flood.

I say it again—no, thank you.

The packets are pleasant to read about and chat about, but as a regular means of travel, I am certain I should have preferred the stagecoach with its stops at the taverns. They must have been tiresome enough on long journeys, but at least you were privileged to eat and sleep quietly, if not always comfortably. And you could figure, with some degree of certainty, as to the time of arrival at your destination.

Whereas, aboard the packet—What was it the darky said about railroad travel *versus* travel by air? “If some’n’ happens to you when you’s down here—why, dere you is. But if some’n’ happens to you when you’s way up yonder—why, where is you?”

After all, and in spite of the accident list in Monday morning’s papers—after all, a motorcar isn’t so bad.



Clams and Quahaugs



A NEW YORKER will tell you that there are two kinds of clams — hard and soft. The variety with the long, thin shell is a soft clam and that with the round, thick shell is a hard clam. The Cape Codder, however, will tell you nothing of the kind.

To him a clam is a clam and a quahaug is a quahaug. They are both shellfish — yes; but that does not prove anything. A hen and a canary are both feathered, but if you expect a hen to sing like a canary, you will be disappointed. And if you expect a quahaug soup with tomatoes in it to taste like a Cape Cod clam chowder, you will be even more so. Each of them may be good of its kind, but they are different kinds, that's all. You may

call a clam a "sedge" or a "sea clam" or a "rundown", but he is a clam, just the same. And calling a quahaug a "Little Neck" or a "cherrystone" does not make him any the less a quahaug.

Yes, and there are other differences. For example, you dig clams and you rake quahaugs.

The distinction between the two is something that the Cape Cod child learns at his mother's knee — or at her table. He knows and therefore to him the carelessness of the outlander is surprising. Even more surprising is the indisputable fact that, in this world of ours, there are people who never saw a clam — would not recognize one if they met him on the flat at low tide.

In the course of years of story-telling I have occasionally — or semioccasionally, anyhow — mentioned both clams and quahaugs. And, at various times, I have received letters from eager seekers for information. "Just what is the Cape Cod clam?" they want to know. "What does he look like? Does he really taste as good as you say he does?"

A correspondent from Australia sent a two-page letter not so long ago. He was really interested in clams, that Melbourne correspondent — "clam conscious" I suppose our Freudian friends might call him. They had shellfish in his part of the world that were sometimes called clams, but he was pretty certain that they were not our kind of clams.

He was right, they were not. He had drawn a picture of the Australian clam and the resemblance between it and our home-grown variety was faint. As I remember,

judging by that picture, the clam who had posed for its portrait in the *Antipodes* was almost circular — not plumply round like a quahaug, either — but thinner, more anemic, if you get what I mean. And, too, if I remember correctly, the clam on our own Pacific Coast is tiny, — about as big as a silver quarter. Delicious, though, if prepared by Monsieur Pierre in the little San Francisco restaurant where we made his acquaintance. It seems to me that he was not called a clam on the menu card; he had a more aristocratic name and his cost was more aristocratic also.

The dictionary — we infer that it was not compiled by a Cape Codder — says there are countless varieties of clams. It even mentions the “razor clam” among them. Now, every boy of our generation in our town knew that a “razor fish” was not a clam at all. He was not shaped like a clam. He was long and thin — he did look something like an old-fashioned razor with the blade closed into the handle — and he lived buried in the wet sand on the flats, a quarter of a mile or more from high-tide mark. He marked his home by the tiny ring, with a hole in the middle of it, in the sand above his head. He had made that ring by squirting water up through the hole. In that respect he was like a clam, for clams squirt too — real clams, we mean, not quahaugs.

The Cape Cod boy’s procedure with a razor fish was, and perhaps still is, simple and primitive. Having located him, he thrust his fingers into the sand and dug as rapidly as possible. Rapidity was essential for, unless one was very quick, the razor fish slid out from between his

shells and downward; in which case, when the two shells were resurrected, their former occupant was no longer at home; he was at large and seeking lower levels.

But, if we were quick enough, we got him while at least a third of him was still in residence. After that — well, if you don't mind, we won't go into details.

I have known people who said that razor fish made a wonderful stew, as sweet and flavorsome as a scallop stew. I never tasted a stew made from the razor fish, but I do remember what he used to taste like. And, after all, everyone eats oysters and Little Necks *au naturel*.

Our wide stretches of flats were habited by clams, thousands and thousands of them. At the inner edge, bordering the clumps of coarse beach grass, were the "sedge clams", the little fellows, tender and just right for a bake or a boil. Farther out were the "rundowns", the big chaps with their shells snowy white. Rundowns were best in a chowder. And, away out, along the outer bar, almost two miles from shore and only get-at-able when the tide was at full ebb, were the large "sea clams." Sea clams made the best clam pie.

To dig clams, as they should be dug, a clam hoe and a "dreener" are the proper equipment. The clam hoe, as of course almost everyone knows, differs from the garden hoe. To dig clams with a garden hoe is a rash and unprofitable adventure. The sharp edge of the blade cuts through the tender shells and, although you may get your clam, you are all too likely to get him in sections. I remember a neighborhood clam bake, presided over and superintended by a veteran Codder, where one of the

guests, a city visitor, insisted on digging his own share and, as the clam hoes were all in use, he dug with an ordinary hoe. When he brought in his spoil, the veteran looked into the half-filled pail and sniffed.

"Say, Mr. Jones," he observed sadly, "it's too bad, but you've made a mistake in your figurin'. We wasn't cal'-latin' to have clam hash."

The Cape Cod clam hoe has three or four narrow and deep prongs instead of one shallow blade. Its handle, too, is short, not more than two or three feet long. You set the prongs into the sand at their full depth and then pull. The wet sand is heaped between your feet as you dig and, between hoofuls, you stoop and pick up the clams you have uncovered. By "stoop" I mean, of course, stoop lower, for you have been stooping all the time. Clam digging is a back-breaking business—for a greenhorn. An hour of it is enough to take the starch out of the most dignified backbone and helps to add to a pious vocabulary.

The "dreener" is a sort of lath crate with a handle to carry it by. The clams, as they are dug, are deposited in it and, after digging, are washed by dipping the dreener and its contents into a pool of clean water. Moving the dreener up and down in the water rinses away the sand, or is supposed to.

The dreener was a drainer once, probably, but it has not been one for more than a century down on the Cape. It is a dreener, just as a Cape fisherman's barrel is a—a—I declare I don't know exactly how to tell you what it is. Something between a barrel and a "beerill" and a "burrill", but not precisely either. I could pronounce it

for you but to save my life I cannot spell it adequately. There is a "b-r-r-r" in the middle of it that defies orthography.

Digging the rundowns is like digging for sedge clams, except that the digger works faster. And he gets fewer clams at a time. The results are worth the effort, however, for they — the clams — are often from three to four inches in length, fat — and, oh, so white and clean.

There is little real digging in a sea-clam hunt. These big, three-cornered fellows lie with their backs exposed or just beneath a clearly visible mound of sand. I never heard that sea clams were good for anything, as an edible, except, as stated before, in a clam pie. They are tough. The fish like them and they are gathered principally for bait.

The professional clam digger is usually an interesting chap. He knows his job; he doesn't make hash of *his* clams. I knew one old fellow who had dug and sold clams for forty years and, when he died at eighty-six, had dug his regular allotment only the week before. He was a tough old boy, physically strong and hard as nails, and proud of the fact. Proud of his digestion, too. The last time I met him he was boasting of the latter.

"There was a doctor fellow down here last summer," he said, "and he come into the shanty to see me. Wanted to know how old I was. When I told him he says, 'They tell me you can eat a piece of mince pie any time of night. Is that so?'

" 'I can,' says I, 'and when I feel like it, I do.'"

" 'And it don't bother you none afterwards?'

“‘Neither afterwards nor then.’

“He shook his head. ‘I’m what they call a sort of specialist along eatin’ lines,’ he says, ‘and you interest me. Would you mind if I sort of looked you over?’

“‘Nary a mite,’ says I, ‘if you don’t charge nothin’ for doin’ it. Heave aboard and look.’

“So he done it. Pawed me around and punched me alow and aloft and asked more ’n a million questions. When he got through he shook his head again.

“‘Cal’late you’ve got the answer, do you?’ I wanted to know.

“‘Guess I’ve got the only one there is,’ he says. ‘I don’t believe you’ve got any stomach. What you’ve got is a gizzard.’”

This old clam digger and his wife used to make and sell clam chowder to summer people. They provided chowder in any quantity on short notice for home consumption or for beach picnics. The wife died several years before he did and, naturally, his former customers presumed that put an end to the chowder supply. But not a bit of it.

“Why, yes,” he admitted dolefully, “she’s gone . . . But,” perking up, “that ain’t no reason why you can’t have your chowder. I can cook clams yet—I *hope*.”

On the occasion when he told me the “gizzard” story, he finished the conversation with a laugh and a shrug.

“Oh, yes,” he said, “they tell me I’m gettin’ old and I presume likely I be. But,” squaring his shoulders, “by gorry, I don’t *feel* old.”

And I think he was telling the truth. Forty years of

clam digging and he still felt young! Why, one hour of it will make the average man feel that he is at least a hundred. I know that from personal experience.

The quahaug — please give him the local pronunciation “Ko-hog” — is not brought to the surface with a clam hoe. He must be raked for. If you are a casual, an amateur, quahauger, you may use a garden rake and go after him at low tide. He lies on the bottom, usually under a layer of seaweed and in at least a few inches of water. You rake the seaweed just as you would rake a lawn, lifting the rake after each stroke to pick the quahaugs from between its teeth. Then you put them into a bucket or dreener. Raking for quahaugs in this way is not as hard work as clam digging.

But if you are a professional — if you “go quahauging” regularly, to earn a living — you do work hard. Indeed you do. You may do it in two ways, the first a trifle easier than the second. The first way is to put on fisherman’s boots, high rubber boots reaching above the hips and secured to your belt, and wade the submerged flats at the edges of the channels, raking as you go. And you use a regulation quahaug rake. Its teeth are much longer than those of an ordinary rake and are turned up at the ends, making the implement a sort of scoop. And, because a dreener would be a hindrance rather than an aid to this sort of work, you fasten a canvas or burlap bag, open end up, to your belt, and put your quahaugs into that. The bag is heavy and growing heavier all the time, the boots are heavy, the rake anything but light, and the wading through the seaweed not easy. Does sound like hard

work, doesn't it? Yes, but wait a moment. You have not been "deep quahauging" yet.

Deep quahauging is a comparatively recent innovation on the Cape — at least, I believe it is. Cape Codders have always raked quahaugs; no doubt the first settlers raked for them along the flats. But when we were youngsters, we never heard of anyone seeking them in deep water. To go quahauging in a boat would have been a town joke in our youth. But scores do that very thing now and do it daily.

There is a yarn to the effect that the idea originated like this: Someone was out in the bay — we were never told which bay — dredging for flounders. And, at one spot, the dredges brought up hundreds and hundreds of quahaugs, big ones. Flounders were scarce at the time and there was always a market for quahaugs. So this particular dredger marked the spot and returned to it next day and the days succeeding. Others, of course, followed his example and "deep quahauging" became a regular and profitable profession.

The deep quahauger goes out to the grounds in a motor-boat or skiff. There he anchors and begins to work. His rake is a toothed scoop, somewhat like that used by the wader, but bigger and heavier; sometimes it is weighted to make it heavier still. Its wooden handle is forty feet long and flexible. He throws the scooped end as far from the boat as he can, lets it sink to the bottom, and then draws it toward him and up to the boat, working the long handle backward over his shoulder in a series of jerks. When he gets it into the boat, he paws

over the half bushel or so of mud and sand and seaweed, picks out his quahaugs, dumps the trash — “culch” he would call it — over the side and makes another cast. And he keeps on casting and jerking and sorting and dumping all day long, with a brief rest while he eats his lunch. He makes, so they say, a pretty fair wage, and I think he earns it.

If, in the summer, you are motoring by — well, let us say the upper end of Pleasant Bay, between Orleans and Chatham, and look out over the water toward the east, you will see a dozen or more boats anchored a mile or so out. The occupants of those boats are quahaugers, every one of them.

Seen from the shore, or even from a passing boat, one might consider deep quahauging in Pleasant Bay about as safe a semi-marine occupation as could be found. Ordinarily it is. The Bay is seldom very rough, land is not far distant, and the deep quahauger knows how to handle a boat. Hard work, very hard work, but perfectly safe.

And yet, a year or two ago, one of the occupants of those boats died while working, and it was because he was working that death came to him. He was a man in the thirties, married and the father of a good-sized family of young children.

His was one of a group of a dozen quahaug boats that summer afternoon. The forenoon had been clear and calm, but, about two o'clock, heavy clouds began rolling up from the western horizon. The quahaugers, weather-wise Capers all of them, knew what was coming — a thunderstorm, a “tempest”, as we in Barnstable County

term it. One by one they pulled in their rakes, hauled up their anchors and prepared to row to the beach. But "Bill" made no move. He kept on tossing out his rake and pulling it in again.

They called to him. "Come on, Bill!" they shouted. "Can't you see we're goin' to have a tempest? Want to get soaked through, do you?"

Bill looked over his shoulder at them.

"Nothin' but a shower," he said. "Be all over in half an hour. What's the matter with you fellows? Made of sugar and salt, are you? Little fresh water might do some of you good. Better stay on the job, I'd say."

They tried to persuade him to leave with them, but he was resolute.

"I've got a wife and five children to look out for," he declared. "I'm goin' to work for 'em while the workin's good."

So they rowed away and left him. On the shore, from the windows and door of one of the shanties, they watched the clouds spread across the sky, saw the flashes of lightning leap from cloud to cloud, and heard the thunder boom and rattle. The rain poured down. Out on the bay, in the midst of the deluge, they could see Bill working away, apparently not in the least disturbed by the "tempest."

And then came a blinding lightning flash and a thunderclap which seemed to burst at their very ears. They turned to look at each other and then they looked out over the Bay.

"Wonder how Bill liked that one?" asked somebody.

But Bill was not standing up in his boat. The boat was there, but he, apparently, was not. They ran to their own boats and rowed out. Bill was lying across the heap of quahaugs on the bottom of his skiff. He was dead. The lightning had struck the upper end of his long rake, as he held it over his shoulder, and had passed through his body. The self-sacrifice which had led him to brave a soaking for the sake of his wife and five children had brought his death upon him.

In rereading all this about clams and clam digging and quahaugs and quahaug raking—it does seem, I admit, to be unnecessary and superfluous. Everyone who lives on or habitually visits Cape Cod knows as much as I do about these things. But the publisher friend reminds me that there may be readers who have never dug a clam or raked a quahaug, have never even witnessed either process. This, to a 'longshore mind, does not seem possible, but it may be so. For their benefit, therefore, it shall stand and the sophisticated are at liberty to “skip” as much as they like.

At any rate there will be no more about gathering clams and quahaugs. I shall pass on to what, at my age, are far more attractive subjects—that is, cooking and eating them.

Let us not waste time with the young quahaug—the Little Neck or the “cherrystone.” Everyone knows that he should be eaten raw and almost everyone must have so eaten him. The mature specimen, however, the hardened old veteran, is a different proposition. The only creatures that eat *him* raw and appear to enjoy the process are fish

and seagulls. But a codfish will swallow a good-sized section of a "wrinkle" and come back for more — and "wrinkle" is the fisherman's name for a form of hard-shelled conch, the flesh of which is about the consistency of the heel of a rubber boot. As for a gull, he will eat anything he can swallow, including a sculpin, or a hard-shelled crab, or an oyster that died the previous winter, or a foot-long eel. He will try anything once — or, if necessary, twice.

A gull's procedure with a middle-aged quahaug is interesting. Even his iron beak cannot break through that armor-plate shell and he knows it. So, having secured his prey, he flies with it until he is over a rock or the planks of a wharf or the deck of an anchored boat — over something which, he figures, has the necessary power of resistance. Then he drops the quahaug and hovers, waiting hopefully for the smash. If the shell does not break the first time, he swoops, recaptures his victim, flies higher and tries again. In the end he wins. Then he settles down to pick up his dinner from the ruins.

The full-grown quahaug, like the ancient clam digger before mentioned, toughens with age. After he has been put through a meat grinder, he does very well in a chowder, he is good in a stew and he makes a fair pie — if, in these degenerate days, you can still find the right person to make that kind of pie. But, even then — and certainly fellow Capers will agree with me — he is not one-two-three with the Cape Cod clam.

For a Cape Cod clam — the sea clam excepted — is sweet and tender. His flavor is more delicate than that of



CAPTAIN HUNTER, AN OLD SCALLOP FISHERMAN

the quahaug. His shell is thin. He does not live in the mud — on the Cape he doesn't — but in clean sand and washed over by pure, clean water. And when you use *him* as the basis of a chowder, or a bake, or steamed, as the beginning of a shore dinner, you have something worth gloating over.

I referred to letters from readers of my Cape Cod stories asking for information concerning clams. There have been many of them, but not nearly as many as there have been from anxious inquirers who ask to be told how to make a "genuine" Cape Cod clam chowder. Giving recipes is a risky business, anyway, and what pleases one's own palate is not, by any means, certain to please the other fellow's. And, besides, I am not writing a cookbook.

But, nevertheless, I am going to take the risk. Here is the recipe for a chowder which has pleased many. I do not guarantee satisfaction — but I expect it.

Take a quart of clams — Cape Cod clams, of course. Then —

But, no — wait a minute. I won't take the risk, after all. I might forget something, or omit something, or make a mistake somewhere, and then think of the letters I should get. Instead I shall follow my usual custom and shift responsibility.

If you happen to own a copy of the "Boston Cooking School Cook Book", you will find in it a recipe for clam chowder which, if followed, makes as "genuine" a Cape Cod chowder, of the best kind, as any I know — and I have known many. Stick to that formula and use Cape clams and you ought to be happy.

You will notice that the recipe calls for eight common crackers. If you live in New England, you know what a "common cracker" is. About as big as the case of an old-fashioned silver watch — a man's watch — and about as thick. If you live, not in New England but near it, you may call it a "Boston" cracker. If you live too far away, you may not be able to find it in the stores. Then you may use the ordinary pilot cracker, but, in that case, you will not need as many — say, three.

Everyone, of course, puts crackers of some sort into a chowder, but they are so often put in by the — by the — what do I want to say? Why, yes, by the consumer. The consumer breaks his crackers into the chowder after it is served. It is considered bad form, we have always been told, to break crackers into one's soup, but the rule does not hold with a chowder. The proper chowder *must* have crackers in it, sooner or later — or both.

Down on the Cape they are put in — some of them — before the chowder is brought to the table. The common crackers are split in half, the halves are soaked in enough cold milk to moisten and, when the steaming plateful is set before you, there they are, floating on top. If they are missing — well, the chowder isn't orthodox, that's all.

Clam fritters used to be called "clam cakes" when we were young. Perhaps they still are, by the older generation, in certain localities. At any rate, we noticed a sign outside one of the roadside eating houses last summer which advertised "clam cakes" as part of the bill of fare. They are clams fried in batter, and when they are made

and cooked as they should be they are delicious. Even then a too liberal indulgence in them is not recommended as a help to a middle-aged digestion. Taste, eat and be thankful, but be careful, that is all. If the digestive apparatus is a young one, then — well, go as far as you like. There was a time when we children would eat raw turnips. And often did — if we found one growing in a neighbor's patch. A home-grown turnip lacked flavor.

But if your clam cake is not cooked properly, if it is soggy and soaked in grease, beware of it. The consequences are bound to be unpleasant. I remember another roadside sign seen in upper New York State a few years ago. It read:

“Ma's Home-Made Pies.

“Pop on Ice.”

An acquaintance of mine is responsible for a column in one of the New York dailies and I sent a copy of this sign to him. He printed it with the heading: “Cause and Effect?”

I really ought to write something about a Cape Cod clambake, but this chapter is too long already, so I must say but little. There are clambakes all up and down the New England shore in summer time. Big ones and little ones, — good, bad and indifferent. A good bake, properly prepared, and with the right sort of clams, is a treat to be remembered. A bad one will be remembered also, but in a different way.

I will not undertake to identify and describe the worst bake I ever shared in, but I am absolutely sure of the best ones. They were prepared by a retired Cape Cod

fishing skipper, who was an artist at the job, an old master. In the little book "From Cape Cod Kitchens", compiled, printed and sold for the benefit of the Harwichport Public Library, this "Rembrandt" of clam bakers gives his formula in lengthy detail, heading it, as it should be headed, "A Cape Cod Clam Bake." The editor, or compiler, goes further than that; he speaks of it as "the perfect clam bake."

And I believe he is right. If you have the time and the patience — and the ingredients — try it and see. I wish you luck, but you must remember that an imitation, no matter how good a one, can never quite equal the original.

Beside clams and quahaugs, there are other varieties of shellfish in the waters bordering the Cape. Cape Cod oysters are famous and Cape Cod scallops, although not perhaps as widely advertised, are the most delicious we know. To get the full flavor of a Cape scallop, it should be cooked and eaten just after it has been cut from the shell. If kept on ice for any appreciable length of time, or "swollen" by the addition of fresh water, it is not half as good. If you are down our way early in October, when the law is "off" on scallops, ask your hostess to give you scallops *brochette* or fried scallops or a scallop stew. Never ate a scallop stew? Then you should. You may take my word that the finest oyster stew ever made is tasteless compared with it.

Up in Maine the old-timers have a favorite delicacy they call "soused clams." The clams, not quahaugs, of course, are pickled in brine — and vinegar, I believe, al-

though I am not sure. They are eaten raw. If you like soused clams, you like them very much. Not being a "State o' Mainer", I feel that that is as much of a recommendation as I ought, honestly, to give.





Ten Cents a Stick



TWENTY YEARS ago, or thereabouts, we were guests in a small old-fashioned hotel in London. It was what was called a family hotel and was as British as the Nelson monument. I, and my family, were the only non-British guests in it at the time, and we were there because it had been recommended to us by English friends. Our small suite comprised two bedrooms and a sitting-room. We paid a shilling for a coal fire in the grate, a shilling for each bath taken in the hall bathroom, and hot water was brought to us each morning in the regulation copper can, which, of course, resembled a garden watering pot.

There was on the lower floor of the hotel a good-sized,

pleasant dining-room, but almost no one used it. The Englishman loves his privacy and by far the greater majority of the meals served to our fellow guests were eaten in the sitting-room attached to the suites. Being Yankees, we were doubtless considered peculiar enough at all times, but as we did not wish to be over-peculiar, we followed the custom and ate by ourselves in our sitting-room.

Occasionally, however, we patronized the "Coffee Room" on the lower floor. That was what it was always called — "The Coffee Room." The waiter, a portly and dignified person with muttonchop whiskers, was named "George." On one occasion, being the only customer in the room, I asked George a question.

"George," I said, "why is this place called the Coffee Room? I have never seen anyone, except ourselves, take coffee in it yet."

George regarded me in blank amazement.

"Beg pardon, sir, but what did you ask?"

I repeated the question. George shook his head.

"Well, now, sir," he explained, as he might have done to a not overbright child, "it is called the Coffee Room, sir, because it *is* the Coffee Room."

This digression in foreign parts may seem decidedly out of place, but it is used because George's answer to my question reminded me of the Herring Brook. Or the Herring Brook reminded me of George's answer, one or the other.

You see, although the stream at the western end of our town had another name, it was never called by it.

In fact, for the life of me, I cannot now remember what the other name was. It doesn't matter. It was called the Herring Brook because it *was* the Herring Brook.

It was — and is still — a lovely little stream, although we grownups are inclined to think of it as lovelier then than at the present. Now its banks are overgrown with weeds and bushes; the little wooden building by the “shut-down place” — that probably had another name too, but I never heard it — is falling to ruin; the timbers and beams and the steps leading down to the platform where the barrels used to be are decayed and splintered; the tall willow trees — they were old in our young days — have lost almost all their branches; the gristmill across the road is no longer running and the water wheel does not turn. The Herring Brook is picturesque even yet, but, like the old gray mare in the song, it “ain't what it used to be.”

But then, most things aren't what they used to be when I and my friends were boys. Neither are the boys, for that matter.

The Herring Brook was a good two miles from our house, but we used to go there often during spring and summer and fall. In the winter it had no particular attraction — the Schoolhouse Pond, with its skating, was the center of interest then. But when the ice melted and the new buds came on the trees and a fellow began to think of fishing and things like that, then the Herring Brook and its vicinity was, on Saturdays, an attractive spot.

There was no fishing — our kind of fishing — in the brook itself. But it flowed from the ponds above and in



THE HERRING RUN

those ponds there were plenty of fish. A good many of the larger ponds on the Cape are called lakes now, but the Cape Cod of earlier generations had not a lake on it. They were all ponds. Wequaket Lake over in Centerville was Nine Mile Pond, and Pleasant Lake on the Harwich and Brewster line was Long Pond, and the inlet at Harwichport was the Salt Pond. In the '80's the Salt Pond was rechristened "Wychmere." They did things like that at that period and, so far as I know, they were never punished for doing them. It was in the '80's or '90's that the new shore road in Chatham was christened "The Ocean Boulevard." And the person, or persons, responsible for that crime are still at large.

In the Big Mill Pond and the Little Mill Pond above the dam were pickerel and white perch and yellow perch—the latter were always called "red perch", for some unknown reason—and hornpout and eels. The flume, just above the dam was full of them. We youngsters liked to stand in the dark, cool interior of the mill, lean over the wooden barrier above the shute leading to the wheel and look down into the water. The sunshine made that shute as clear as an aquarium and, like an aquarium, it swarmed with fish. Big ones and little ones. We could pick out the big fellows we wanted to catch and lower our baited hooks right in front of their noses. The only trouble was that we never caught them. The fish in that shute simply would not bite. The answer, I suppose, is that in that glare of sunshine the lines and hooks were as plainly visible to them as they, the fish, were to us. We never caught anything in that shute, but we kept trying.

The Herring Brook attracted us youngsters through-

out three quarters of the year, but it was in May or early June that it became of general interest to all, grownups as well as children. Then the herring run was on.

The Cape Cod herring is, as everyone knows, an alewife. According to the dictionary, the name was "perhaps jocularly given or, perhaps, derived from the Indian." It, the same dictionary, also adds that the alewife is "a poor food fish." Well, maybe, but Cape Codders did not use to think so. Either that, or they were accustomed to poor food, an alternative which, I am sure, no Codder will admit. In at least one of the towns—and no doubt in many others—each child born within township limits was entitled to so many herring—alewives of course—each year. This was an old law dating back to early Colonial times. Herring was an accepted part of the community food supply.

When the run was on, the brook was literally packed with herring. Leaning over the rail of the bridge by the mill, and looking down, one could see that the water was thick with them. They were as close together as—I wish I could think of a good simile. Spread the fingers of your hand as far as you can spread them and let each finger represent the back of a fish. They were as close together as that. The brook, where it ran under the road, was confined in a conduit perhaps four feet wide and, after emerging, passed in a low fall to the stream beneath. And those herring, going up to the ponds to spawn, shot up that fall like arrows. It was fun to watch them.

About a hundred feet from the foot of the fall, where the brook ran between boulders and the channel was

narrowest, was a section with plank gates which raised and lowered in grooves. Ordinarily, in the herring season, these gates were kept closed and the water forced to flow through another and wider section, walled and floored with plank and also fitted with gates at each end. Once daily, at "shut-down" time, these latter gates were closed and those of the regular channel opened. The surplus water in the artificial channel drained away through holes in the lower gate and the herring were left high and dry, trapped in a wooden box.

It has been a long time since I witnessed a "shut down" in that brook, so these details have been written from memory; I hope, however, that they are near enough to the correct reality to give an accurate picture.

For it was a picture. The Herring Brook runs through a little valley between hills—or what passes for hills on the Cape. Scargo Hill at Dennis is said to be, and probably is, the highest land on Cape Cod, and is—for a guess, I haven't the figures here and it does not seem worth while to hunt for them—about two hundred feet above sea level. A friend had for years in his employ a man who lived in the westward end of our town and on one occasion the family took a motor trip through the White Mountains in New Hampshire and this man drove the car. As he piloted the automobile up and down the long slopes, his eyes opened wider and wider. At the foot of one mile-long incline, he drew a deep breath.

"Godfrey's mighty!" he sighed fervently. "I'll never call Mill Hill a hill again long's *I* live."

But Mill Hill was the steepest, if not the highest, hill

in our part of the county and the Herring Brook was at the bottom of it. So, to get back to our picture, we will suppose you to be standing with the rest of us — men, women and children — on the platform by the herring shanty, and looking down into and across the brook. On the other side the bank rises steeply to its crest, where is perched a little house, of the story and a half gray-shingled variety, with morning-glory vines clambering over its sides and early flowers under its windows. The grass of the hillside is broken with gray boulders and decorated with clumps of bayberry bushes. Below them are the willows, bright with their new green, and, between them and drooping over the foaming water, are elderberry bushes in bloom.

The floor and gated upper section of the stream has no water in it now, but it is not empty — no, indeed. It is filled for two thirds of its depth with silver — silver that is alive, that leaps and flaps and is never still. And in the midst of this — buried almost to the knees in glistening fish — is a rubber-booted man with a dip-net, who bends to scoop netful after netful of herring and empty them into a barrel hung in chocks between up-rights. At the edge of the platform are other men who, as soon as this barrel is filled, up-end it to empty its contents into another barrel, one of a waiting row. The filled barrels are rolled away and others brought up as they are needed. Chatter, laughter, excited squeals from the juveniles in the audience and, overhead, the clear blue sky of a late May day on Cape Cod and the May sunshine flooding everything.

To us there, that is a picture not to be forgotten. Possibly one should be a boy, a Cape Cod boy, to appreciate it fully, but I am not too sure of that. I seem to remember blasé city people, grownups, who waxed enthusiastic when witnessing a "shut down" for the first time.

There were far more herring taken during the running season than the townspeople could use, of course, and many were shipped to the city. But a surprising number were taken care of locally. Some were eaten fresh—Grandmother used to say, "I do relish a nice fresh herring with my breakfast"—but many more were salted and smoked. Before salting or smoking, they were strung on sticks.

The sticks were for the most part whittled from cedar—we are quite sure cedar was the wood used. Made from the old split-cedar rail fences that used to be so common. You see very few of these old rail fences nowadays. In our boyhood they were plenty. We used to make our bows and arrows from cedar rails. The herring sticks were pointed at both ends and whittled thin enough to pass through the gills of the fish. A dozen were strung on a stick. All along the Cape roads the lettered signs on the fences used to read, "Herring 10 Cents a Stick." Occasionally we see those signs now, but not very often.

Against the rafters of practically every barn, and in many sheds and outbuildings, those sticks of herring used to hang. You could smell them before you opened the door. During the summer they were often hung out of doors in the sunshine, festooning the eaves of barns and sheds. You could smell them there, too. That is one char-

acteristic of a herring which salting or drying does not remove, but rather accentuates — the smell. The memory of an old-time Cape Cod kitchen at breakfast hour would not be complete without the odor of fried herring. Call him an alewife if you will, but, like the rose by another name, it does not change his aroma.

And, besides his scent and his flavor, the herring has another specialty — bones. Except the shad, I never met another fish as well fortified with bones. Our old doctor used to say that he welcomed the fresh herring season because it added to his income. Scarcely a day passed, he used to declare, that he was not called upon to extract a herring bone from a child's throat. He said that, but it was an exaggeration, very likely. He was addicted to exaggeration. When we children were very young he assured us that he, personally, liked the taste of castor oil. We believed then, and we have not altered our belief since, that that statement was an exaggeration — or something worse.

But when I state, as I did earlier in this chapter, that the herring used to be a regular and important part of Cape Cod's food supply I do not exaggerate. They not only ate them on land but carried them on fishing vessels as part of the regular rations. A good friend of ours, now dead, more is the pity — a comrade with whom we camped and fished and sailed times without number — was an old sea captain. In his youth, however, he had gone "mackereling" aboard Captain Ote Young's little fore-and-aft schooner. (Young was not his name, of course; I am always careful to avoid real names in my writings. Even fictitious ones are likely to be claimed

by some indignant individual and then an author is in trouble.)

This Captain Young, so our friend said, had the reputation, spread by the unlucky foremast hands who had sailed with him, of being a "poor provider." He was a first-rate skipper and fisherman, but he fed his crews in meager fashion. A cook who shipped with him one trip — I never heard of any cook shipping with Captain Ote for more than one trip — swore that, the second day out, he asked the skipper what he should prepare for the crew's supper.

"Well," drawled Ote, "if you go below, you'll find a ham hangin' up. Cut off a couple of slices and fry 'em."

The cook obeyed orders and, so he said, found a ham *bone* hanging from a nail, but with absolutely not a shred of meat left on it. He came on deck again and reported the result of his finding. Captain Ote pulled his beard.

"Ain't nothin' on it, eh?" he queried.

"A little gristle, that's all."

Captain Ote reflected. "Humph!" he grunted. "Then maybe you better bile it."

This story has nothing to do with our subject, of course, but then, these reminiscences are like Artemus Ward's lectures on the Mormons. Artemus used to say that the chief merit of his discourse was that it contained so many things that had nothing to do with what he was supposed to be talking about. And, besides, the ham story is not the one I started to tell, anyway. That yarn also deals with Captain Ote and is more or less relevant.

According to our friend, an acquaintance of his sailed

with the Captain on another trip in the same schooner. On this cruise, so the narrator avowed, the sole supply of "hearty" on board were three sticks of salt herring. If you are a confirmed Cape Codder, you know that "hearty" means, or used to mean, "meat victuals."

The herring lasted four days and the schooner did not return to port until the afternoon of the sixth day. When the yarn was sprung upon its innocent victim, there was always a pause at this point. And then the said victim, having been allowed time to think it over, was supposed to, and usually did, ask this question:

"But if there were no more herring, what did you and the rest of the crew eat during those last two days?"

"Oh," with sad solemnity, "we chewed the sticks."

The person responsible for this statement of unvarnished fact was accustomed to add that Captain Ote lived to a ripe old age and died in his bed.

"He had enlargement of the heart and it killed him."

You may believe this too, if you like.





Picking Time



ARE they still selling that postcard? I cannot remember when I first saw a specimen, but it must have been at least twenty years ago. At that time — yes, and each succeeding summer until very recently, it has been displayed in gift shops and souvenir shops from one end of the Cape to the other. You know the card meant, the one with a pen-and-ink sketch entitled, “Imaginary Cape Cod.” That may not be the exact title, but it was something like that.

The sketch showed a stretch of sandy beach, with clams stuck in it as thick as currants in a fruit cake, a scraggy pine or two, a shingled shanty, and a few bushes. In the

middle distance a man was fishing from the shore, with a rod and line. He had just landed a mammoth sea monster, apparently a cross between a cod and a shark, and was swinging it towards the shanty, from the open window of which a woman was leaning to catch it in the frying pan which she held at arm's length. In the foreground a picturesque damsel, dressed like one of the "merry villagers" in an old-fashioned comic opera, was picking cranberries from one of the bushes, the bush itself being at least five feet high. The idea was, of course, to depict what the average American who had never visited the Cape conceived it to be like.

These cards were very popular and may be so yet, for all the writer knows to the contrary. They "tickled" the visitor exceedingly and he or she sent them to uncles and aunts and cousins and sweethearts everywhere. There was just enough truth in the satire to make it amusing, especially the "bush cranberry" joke. At least half a dozen summer sojourners have confessed to the writer that up to the time of this, their first visit, they, themselves, had believed that cranberries did grow on bushes.

The native Cape Codder, or the Cape Codder by adoption or seasonal habit, chuckled over the card and at the confessions, but there was an element of condescending pity in his chuckle. A state of affairs such as this went far to prove that there was something wrong with the country's educational system, something which called loudly for reform. When even a small proportion of the inhabitants of these United States was so densely ignorant as not to know how one of the most important

items in its Thanksgiving dinner was grown and gathered, it was no wonder that the vote went the way it did at the last election.

For cranberries and cranberry swamps — or bogs, if you like — are almost as common on the Cape as potato patches and, generally speaking, ever so much more profitable. The flat, green acres, intersected with ditches and with dikes at their ends or sides, are a part of the landscape, and Barnstable County would not be Barnstable County without them. In the winter their flooded, frozen surfaces make good outdoor skating rinks; in the spring their expanse of glistening vines are like great carpets spread in the hollows; in the summer the billions of tiny young berries are showing and people speculate as to the size of the crop, and careful owners and superintendents are on the lookout for blights and worms and flies and other pests; in the autumn is the culmination — profit or disappointment — for the fall is picking time.

Picking time even now is very important to the Caper, but it seems as if it were ever so much more important forty-five or fifty years ago. This assumption, however, may be based upon the fact that I, myself, had a stronger personal interest in it at that time. I am now looking at it from the side lines, so to speak, whereas then I was in the game itself. This does make a difference; but there are other differences. For example, there are those scoops.

The modern cranberry scoop is a wooden contrivance. It has a boxlike bottom and sides, and the top, for two thirds of its length, is toothed, the teeth set about half an inch apart. There is a wooden handle on the upper

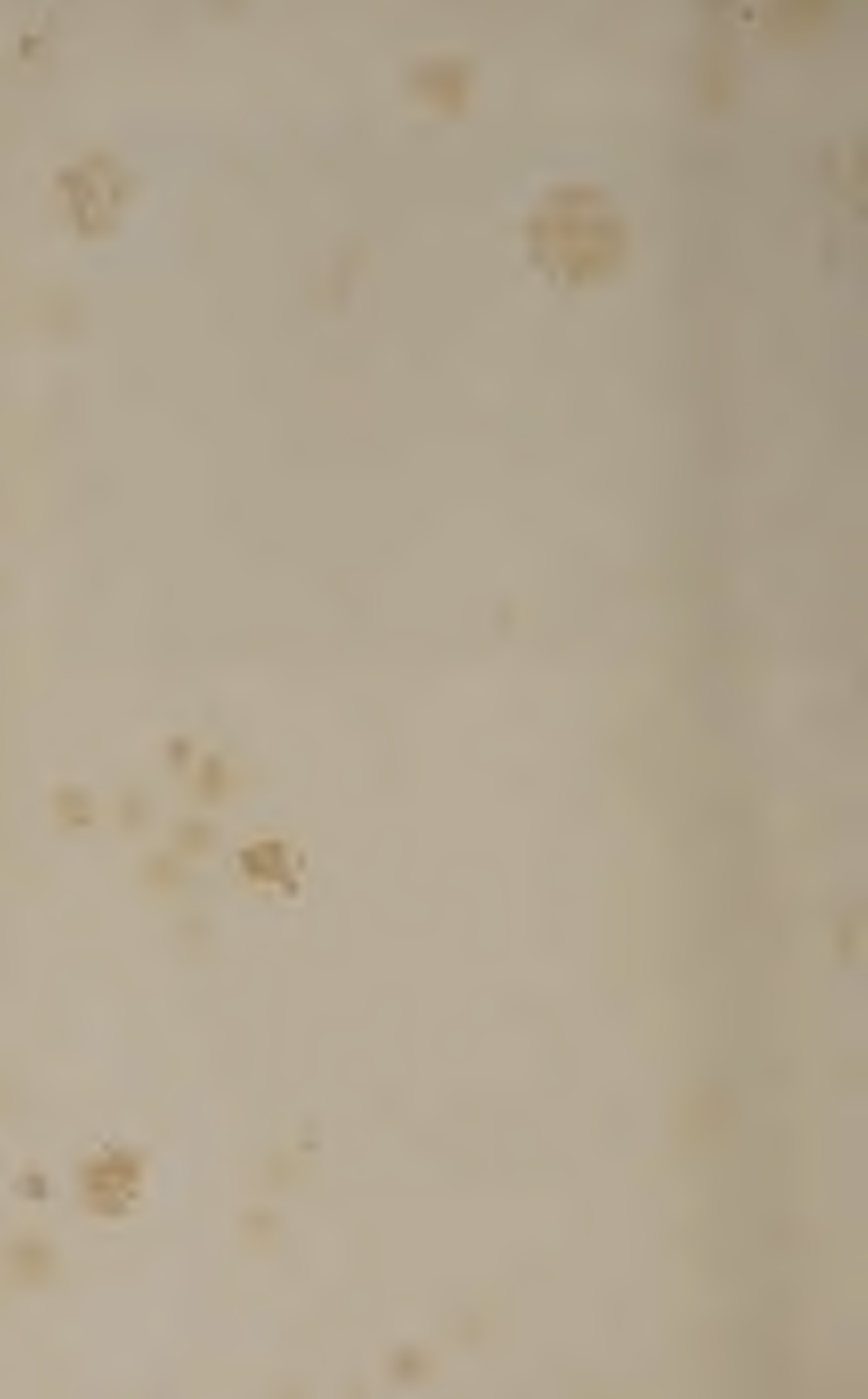
side at the end nearest the picker. He — for the most of the pickers nowadays seem to be of the male sex — crawls on his knees along his “row” and, holding the scoop by its handle, thrusts the teeth into the tangle of vines before him, lifting as he thrusts. The teeth separate and straighten the vines and the berries fall back into the boxlike lower end.

Of course, there is really not the slightest need to describe these scoops. Every summer visitor knows what they look like. The antique shops have them on sale — the discarded ones — although not for the use for which they were originally intended. Set on end in the living room of the summer cottage or in the “den” at South Orange or Oshkosh, they make “perfectly intriguing” magazine racks. Just as a battered old cobbler’s bench, with its round leather seat and rack of little drawers, makes a marvellous afternoon tea table. The hostess sits on the leather seat and keeps her sugar and other accessories in the drawers where the cobbler once kept his shoe pegs and tools and thread and wax. No cobbler of our time ever thought of serving tea from his bench, and no cranberry picker I ever knew of kept magazines and papers in his scoop, but they were not in the antique business. It takes an antique dealer to think of things like that.

Now — and again I am only looking on from the side lines — it seems to me that the picking “gangs” are not so large as they used to be. And that, as I said before, they are almost entirely composed of men and boys. It was not so in our picking days. Men and boys picked then



CRANBERRY TIME



— oh, yes — but so did girls and women, married and single, and mothers and grandmothers. As for us youngsters, we all picked. No matter whether your father was as rich as Captain Solon Crocker, who was chairman of the Board of Selectmen and who wore a beaver hat weekdays as well as Sundays and a fur neckpiece and gloves in winter, or as poor as Seth Cash, who kept his trousers up to the safety point with rope instead of suspenders — when picking time came you were on hand. Captain Crocker, of course, did not pick, but his youngest son did. Mr. Cash not only was himself a picker, but so were his wife and the six young Cashes. There was even a seventh, but she, being too young to walk, was left in charge of the kind-hearted women at the screening trough. When the baby became obstreperous or needed attention, one of the screeners called and Mrs. Cash dropped her “measure” and hurried to the first-aid station.

It was not, I am sure, the money to be gained which made us boys and girls — most of us, at any rate — so eager to pick cranberries. To a number of families the earnings from the picking season were an important part of the year’s income, but it was not so with me and most of my intimate associates. Of course, the money counted for something. It was, in my own case and in that of the majority of the sons and daughters of my neighbors, ours to keep or spend as we pleased. That may sound like ill-advised generosity on the part of our parents, but it was not so lavish as it sounds. Pickers at that time were paid a cent and a half a quart and, although a smart picker who

attended strictly to business might be handed a fairly substantial sum at the end of the season, we youngsters, who were not particularly smart and attended to many other things beside business, did not earn enough to weigh down our pockets.

Crawling back and forth for eight hours a day, rainy days and Sundays excepted, for a month or so and then, at the end of the season, being presented with four or five dollars, is not an easy road to riches. I said "every day", but that is not strictly correct. If we had picked every day, and had really picked instead of skylarking, we should have earned considerably more, but as we were not — like the young Cashes and the rest of the juvenile "regulars" — herded to the swamp daily, whether we felt like it or not, we naturally did not work all the time. In other words, we picked most days but rested occasionally, the rest days becoming more frequent as the novelty wore off.

To prove that I am not exaggerating the importance of the cranberry-picking season on Cape Cod in those days, it is necessary only to mention its effect upon the schools. Now the Cape schools open early in September, but they did not do so then. To pay an "upstairs" teacher the munificent salary of sixty dollars a month to instruct but a handful of scholars would have been a foolish waste, so the School Committees set the opening day sometime during the first week in October. Picking was practically over by that time and the young folk would be off the swamps. It was as important as that.

Those early days of cranberry picking, those at the be-

ginning of each season, before the experience lost its newness and ceased to appeal, were larks. Imagine the thrill, to a youngster, of starting on a picnic every morning. The swamps within the limits of our township had various owners but contracts for the picking of the berries—those on the larger swamps, at any rate—were let to one of two or three men who bid for them each year. Each of these contractors had his own gang and that gang followed him from swamp to swamp. Some of the pickers, those living an appreciable distance from the swamp to be picked on that particular day or days, rode to their work in the family truck-wagon or ancient two-seater, but we youngsters, as we remember, usually walked.

The walks to and fro were part of the fun. Every little while we met or joined other groups headed for the same destination. Each individual had his or her dinner pail or dinner box—no one, at that period, ever called a picnic meal a luncheon—and a “measure.” A cranberry measure, during our acquaintance with it, at least, was a round affair of tin, holding six quarts. It was girded horizontally with grooves stamped in the tin; when the berries in your measure had reached the level of the lowest groove you had picked one quart, and so on.

The girls were dressed in their oldest old clothes, with broad-brimmed straws hats — “sundowns” we used to call them — and most of them wore aprons made of canvas. We boys, as a general thing, wore overalls with big canvas patches sewed over the knees. We were to spend the day, you understand, crawling and hitching our-

selves forward on those knees, and overalls and dresses cost money — hence the patches and aprons.

The men and women — regular pickers these, in the game for profit; no lark about it so far as they were concerned — were garbed much as we were. The men were overalled and canvas-patched and sundowned, and the grown-up women wore calico sunbonnets tied under their chins. Once in a great while nowadays one sees a sunbonnet, but not often. They were common in our boyhood, queer-looking affairs shaped something like a coal hod. You had to be in front of the wearer of a sunbonnet to see her face; in profile they all looked alike.

Some of the men and boys, all the girls and most of the women, wore heavy cotton gloves. These were to protect the hands while picking. A cranberry vine has no thorns but it is rough and rasping and the most able encourager of hangnails and sore fingers ever encountered.


The swamp we are to pick today is a good-sized one, four or five acres, perhaps. It belongs to Captain Elisha Hamlin and, like any item of property belonging to him, is well taken care of. As flat as a floor, of course, shining green in the sunlight, no weed patches, its ditches brimming full, and the dike and wooden water gate at the farther end trim and neat. Beyond that dike is the blue expanse of Blackberry Pond. In the winter, or at any time when a frost threatens, that gate is lifted and the swamp is flooded with water from the pond. Captain Elisha's swamp is one of our favorite skating places during the winter months.

On the knoll at our end of the swamp, the end where

the road we have been following emerges from the woods, Mr. Luther Gill — our “boss” — has his array of barrels and his screen set up and ready. The barrels are brand-new and they smell “woody” and sweet and clean. They were made at Cahoon’s barrel factory in Harwich. There were barrel factories in almost every Cape town then; they tell me there are not so many now. In recent years it has become the custom to ship cranberries in slatted crates, whereas in our day barrels were used exclusively. The Cahoon factory made fish barrels, too, and did a good business.

The screen is new and clean also. It is a long trough, wider at the closed upper end and narrowing to an opening at the lower. Its sides are, perhaps, a foot high and it is bottomed with narrow slats set a short distance apart. It rests on empty barrels or trestles.

Mr. Gill is standing by the screen and barrels, awaiting the arrival of his gang. As I try to picture him from memory after all these years, his face seems to be mainly whiskers. Practically every adult in our town grew, and carefully cultivated, a beard or mustache or whiskers of some kind, but Mr. Gill’s whiskers were unique. They covered his face from cheekbones to chin with a dense three-inch bristle of shrubbery and were red, with a sprinkle of gray. Irvin Cobb, speaking of the old family doctor of his youth, describes him as “lurking in ambush.” Mr. Gill’s ambush was a thick one; to imagine what his countenance might have looked like if it had ever come out into the open would be a matter of guesswork, with one guess as good as the other.

Mrs. Gill is there, too. Comfortably plump, her round, florid face framed in a sunbonnet. Two of the Gill daughters, also sunbonneted, are with their parents. The older one, Susie, had charge of the "pickers' book." On a page of this book is entered the name of each one of the picking gang and, during the day, as the owner of one of those names brings to the screen a full measure of cranberries, a pencil mark is made opposite his or her name. For the first four measures four marks in a row — thus, | | | |. Then, when the next measure arrives, a fifth and diagonal mark is added — so,  — and the process begun again and repeated. Each five-marks series means that John Newcomb, or Sarah Hallett, or whoever it may be, has picked thirty quarts of berries. At the end of the season, Miss Gill will count and add the groups of marks and her father will "pay off" at the rate of one and a half cents per quart.

Mrs. Gill and the other daughter, Becky, will do the screening. They will stand, one at each side of the slat-bottomed trough, and, as the berries are emptied into it, rub them gently back and forth over the slats. The full-sized berries remain in the screen, the "nubbles" fall through to the ground. All imperfect specimens, the decayed or frost-bitten ones, and all bits of vine and leaf, are carefully picked out and thrown away. At the lower, open end of the screen is a barrel and the inspected and accepted fruit rolls into it. When that barrel is full, Mr. Gill will take it away, head it up, and substitute an empty one.

The swamp — that is, the section of it as yet unpicked

—is laid off lengthwise with stretches of cod line, the stretches at equal distances apart. The space between two of these lines is a “row.” Three or four pickers kneel, side by side, at one end of a row and crawl toward the other end, picking as they crawl. The tin measure is placed between the knees. Behind the line of pickers Mr. Gill walks back and forth, stooping to part the vines and see if his employees are “picking clean.”

With the old-timers, like Mr. and Mrs. Cash and Nathan Ellis and his wife and Mrs. Hulda Dean, he has little trouble. It is amazing to watch their fingers fly and note how quickly their measures fill. Mrs. Dean is nearly seventy—that is her granddaughter, that girl in the blue sunbonnet over there to the left—but the old lady sets a pace that makes the spryest hustle to keep abreast of her. She reaches the end of a row as soon as her younger neighbors and where she has picked there is no need of inspection. Mr. Gill knows this and does not trouble to look; it is at the rear of the juvenile contingent that he does most of his peeping and prying.

“Hi!”

He has not mentioned a name but my guilty conscience prompts a reply.

“Yes, sir.”

“I hate to cut in on you when you’re so busy, bub, but could you spare time to come back here a minute? . . . Aw, do, just to oblige me.”

I go back to where he is standing. He has spread the crushed vines over which I have crawled and there, on the sand beneath, are cranberries, a double handful of

them. You see, there has been a bit of skylarking up at the front, as a result of which I have fallen behind a little. As it is a matter of pride to keep up with one's row, I have made up the lost distance by crawling faster. In consequence, I have not picked clean.

Mr. Gill points to the berries on the ground.

"See them?" he asks cheerfully. "Pretty, ain't they?"

I do not know what to say and am acutely conscious that every picker in the vicinity is looking back and grinning. I must, however, say something, so I answer, "Yes, sir."

"Um-hm. What do you cal'late they be — ground sparrow's eggs?"

"Er — no, sir."

"No? Well, well, that's funny. Ain't eggs, eh? Then what be they?"

"Cranberries."

"What! Cranb'ries? Why, I thought 'twas cranb'ries you was s'posed to be pickin'. How'd it come you didn't pick them there?"

"I—I don't know."

"Humph! Presume likely you didn't want to pick *everything* on the swamp and shame all hands. Well, I'd pick 'em now — and whatever more you left on the way up. I'll be along pretty soon and see what sort of a job you make of it."

He strolls off down the line and I, trying to appear unconscious of the remarks from my comrades at the front, gather up the berries I had previously crawled over. There are a good many.

At twelve o'clock sharp Mr. Gill, who has been looking at his battered silver watch, puts his cupped hands to the section of whiskers covering his mouth and bellows through the underbrush. "Knock off!" he roars. "Knock off-f!"

He invariably repeated the call; why, we knew not. Once was sufficient, so far as I and others of my age were concerned. At the first "Knock" we had dropped our measures and at the "off" we were off, too. Racing for the edge of the swamp and the place where we had *cached* our dinner pail under the spice bushes.

After all, it was the noon hour which made picking time worth while to us lucky youngsters who were not obliged to pick for the money there was in it. I seem to have forgotten how many measures I picked on my best days, but I can remember every noon hour perfectly.

The horses and wagons tethered under the pines; the family groups here and there, the babies and very little tots with their mothers; the grownup girls and young fellows eating together, sometimes in clumps of three or four but more often in couples; and the ten and eleven and twelve-year-olders in hilarious parties — girls in one group and boys in another.

The idea was, of course, to bolt our sandwiches and boiled eggs and doughnuts and pie as quickly as possible, in order to have at least three quarters of that noon hour left for games and "rough house." Fun! We should say so!

Perhaps the modern cranberry picker has as much fun as we used to have, but I am inclined to doubt it. His gang

seems smaller; there are not enough boys and almost no girls in it. And, as I watched from the side lines, he looks too confoundedly efficient with his scoop and all the rest of it. When *he* rides to the swamp, he rides in a Ford. His boss shaves—perhaps not every day, but at least once a week. I miss the Gill whiskers and Mrs. Gill's sunbonnet. No, our picking time was better than his. Ask any member of the old gang and he will tell you so.

I did want to say something about cooking cranberries before I finished this chapter. I *must* say just a little. I will do no more than mention cranberry sauce, for everyone knows about that. Make it *as* a sauce or as a jelly, it is good, very good. But cranberry pie—one just can't slur over cranberry pie.

If your acquaintance with a cranberry pie has been made in a restaurant or hotel dining-room, I do not blame you for not cultivating it. The average restaurant or bakeshop cranberry pie is a sad affair. It is flat and shallow, filled with berries stewed to a soggy paste, and the strips of crust checkerboarding the top are pallid and unhealthy-looking. It reminds one, as much as anything, of a bit of beach at low tide, the filling representing stranded seaweed and the strips of crust the sand. As to taste—well, it is invariably either too sickishly sweet or too puckeringly sour. It is just another one of those things helping to strengthen one's conviction that this world is going to the dogs.

But a real cranberry pie—a homemade, home-baked cranberry pie, prepared by a Cape Cod kitchen-artist of the old school, is different, gloriously different. The

berries in such a pie are not cooked beforehand to the consistency of sticky cement and then plastered over the lower crust with a trowel. No, indeed! Mother, and Grandmother also, used to make a cranberry pie that came to the table fat and puffy and inviting. It was baked in a deep dish and when cut it streamed juice, just as does a properly constructed blueberry pie. The triangular sections on our plates were islands set in red seas. We could—and often did—eat the pie with a spoon.

I should like to give you the recipe for that kind of pie, but, alas, I cannot. I haven't it to give. In my youth we were interested in the completed product, not in the process of manufacture, and the formula, so far as our family is concerned, is lost. One thing I do remember, however: the berries were not mashed and stewed to a pulp; they were, each one, cut in half with a chopping knife. Perhaps some of our fellow Codders may be more fortunate. They may have that recipe yet. If so, I wish they would send it to me.

I have a dim memory that, in our house at that time, a cranberry pie was sweetened with brown sugar. Old-fashioned brown sugar, the moist, lumpy kind. In Grandmother's youth it was, of course, sweetened with molasses. And over at Great-uncle Silas's, in his little house on the North Shore, molasses was still used.

Great-uncle Silas was another of Mother's relatives. She and I used to go there twice a year to visit when I was very young. I wish we might visit that old house now and see it as it used to be and with the old people

in it as *they* used to be. A tiny house, perched high up on the sandy bluff over Cape Cod Bay, its shingled sides spotlessly white, its window blinds green, a whitewashed picket fence enclosing its miniature front yard. Grandmother often told us that that house and its furniture had not changed in the least during her seventy-year acquaintance with them. And that Great-uncle Silas and Great-aunt Hannah had changed no more, that is, so far as their mode of living was concerned. Silas's father and mother had inherited the house and land from his father and mother, and the habits of life had come down with the property and, like that property, had not been changed but merely "well kept up."

Old-fashioned! Well, to begin with, there were the names — Silas and Hannah and Perez, the middle-aged son. And the people fitted the names. Great-uncle Silas was thin and white-haired and wore a fringe of white whisker under a shaven chin. Great-aunt Hannah was plump and rosy-cheeked and spectacled, and, on Sundays, donned a silk dress of the vintage of the '40's and a cameo breast-pin that had been her mother's before her. Perez — well, I do not seem to remember him so well. We did not see much of him, except at meal times.

It is the cooking that is remembered most clearly. Always doughnuts and cookies and pie on the breakfast table. And such pie! No matter what the filling might be, the sweetening was, of course, molasses. And the cookies were invariably molasses cookies. Silas, I am sure — and his wife, I think — used molasses in coffee and tea. I ate molasses on pancakes and, as a special treat

between meals, Great-aunt Hannah often gave me bread and molasses. As you can see, it was distinctly a molasses family.

For molasses in drinkables I am not keen, but, please take my word for it, apple or cranberry pie sweetened with molasses is not bad at all. Especially such pies as Great-aunt Hannah made. *Her* cranberry pie was even better than that we had at home, which is saying much.

We turned in — grownups as well as children — not later than nine o'clock every evening, and we turned out, all of us, at six-thirty in the morning. Nautical terms have been used for retiring and rising, because such terms were always used in that household. Great-uncle Silas would stand by the kitchen door late in the afternoon and look out over the water. "Don't look so good to me," he would say. "Shouldn't wonder if we had rain tomorrow; it's smurrin' up over to the west'ard." A calm sea was always "pretty moderate" when he described it. A rough one was "rugged water." A hard blow was an "able-bodied" one. Those expressions were not original with him; they are used by individuals on both sides of the Cape, but he had some tricks of speech which were all his own. Whether he invented them or not I do not know, but one, at least, which I heard before every meal, was certainly out of the ordinary.

After we were seated at table he bowed his head to ask a blessing. "Sayin' grace" he called it. His was a long grace and never varied in its phrasing. I have forgotten most of it, but one sentence will always stick in my memory.

"Oh, Lord, feed us with Thy divine intents. Amen."

After that he served the clam cakes and fried potatoes and fried apples and cookies and pie and the rest. The pie was usually apple or cranberry. I do not know what a "divine intent" may be — I doubt very much if Silas, himself, knew — but to him it must have sounded good.

And Great-aunt Hannah's cranberry pie *was* good. That I *do* know.





Bank Up for Winter



THE visitor from Ohio stood on the bluff by the lighthouse and looked out to sea. It was an afternoon in August and the breeze was blowing from the northwest. The sky was a deep blue with little feathery wisps of drifting cloud. The ocean was a deeper blue, a sapphire blue, spattered with cottony fluffs of white. The lines of breakers fringing the beaches and marking the shoals were white too, a leaping, tossing, joyous white. Against this background the white gulls, myriads of them, dipped and swooped and fluttered. Along the shore below the bluff the bathers splashed and laughed and shouted. Across the far horizon a three-masted schooner moved gloriously, all sails set, a white bone in her teeth and a white wake astern.

At the rear and to the right and left was the old town, gray-shingled or white-painted, the little houses clustered along the roads, each with its front yard edged by a green hedge or a white picket fence. The elms and silver poplars rose above the roofs and, behind the village, were the low, rolling, Cape Cod hills, with their pine groves and clumps of bayberry and beach-plum bushes.

The visitor from Ohio had just called at the post-office and the Boston newspaper protruded from his jacket pocket. He had been reading, as we all had, of the "hot spell" which was parching the cities. Chicago 100° in the shade, New York 98°, Philadelphia 97°, Baltimore and Washington about the same or worse. And, being human, he was happy in the consciousness that, while he was cool and comfortable, so many of his friends and fellow-countrymen were neither. He drew a deep breath.

"By George," he exclaimed, "this is simply great! I slept under a blanket last night and at home they're sweltering. This is the place to be, there's no doubt about that."

We agreed with him. A northwest day in summer is when Cape Cod "shows off", and we Cape Codders smile graciously and try not to look too smugly self-satisfied.

But then another thought came to his mind. He shook his head.

"Yes, sir," he went on, "this is fine. But if it is as cool as this here now, good Lord, what must it be in winter! Whew! Not for me, thank you."

We said the usual things, of course. We called his attention to the fact—for it is a fact—that the Cape Cod temperature is never very low, even in midwinter. When thermometers in Boston, our nearest large city, are registering zero, the instruments on the Cape are at the least ten degrees above that. In the wicked winter of 1934, when Philadelphia teeth chattered to the tune of fifteen and seventeen below, six was our worst record. And, while their privet hedges and those in Boston and New York froze to the roots, ours sprouted with their customary healthy green when spring returned. The great body of salt water into which Cape Cod is thrust takes a long time to grow warm but a correspondingly long time to cool. Our springs are two or three weeks behind those farther inland but our autumns are, generally speaking, delightful. Also, when it snows in the interior of the State, it usually rains on the Cape.

If it were not for the wind—but we said nothing about the wind to that Ohio man.

The coming of winter, when we were young, did not, as we remember, trouble us very much. It did not leap upon us; it crept in our direction. Certain signs announced its coming to the older people but we paid little attention to them. The beach plums ripened and the wild grapes. The late pears were gathered and Grandmother and Mother and Aunt Mary wrapped them in paper and put them carefully away in the buttery drawers to ripen. It was jelly and preserve time and the kitchen smelled sweet and spicy. They were picking cranberries on the swamps. The stoves were set up and fires lighted in

the dining-room and sitting-room every day, and in the parlor on Sunday. School began — worse luck.

And then, one forenoon, we noticed Mr. Cyrenus Small unloading a cartload of seaweed on the garden side of the house. They were going to “bank up.” Winter *was* coming, sure enough.

Our house, like so many Cape Cod houses of that and earlier periods, had no cellar under the main body of it. There was a cellar, but it was under one corner and was round, like a well, and not much more than three times as wide as the ordinary well, like — say, like Great-uncle Jonathan’s well across the road, where I was sent to fetch water when, as sometimes happened, our cistern ran dry in July or August. The cistern was under the dining-room and connected with the pump in the kitchen sink. On rainy days, if you put an ear to the dining-room floor, you could hear the water running into the cistern from the gutters along the eaves. When, perhaps once a year, it was necessary to clean it, the dining-room carpet was taken up, a trapdoor lifted, and a daredevil person — usually Mr. Small — in high rubber boots went down into it to do the cleaning. A man’s job — yes, sir!

There was a door in the buttery and from it a steep flight of steps led down to the cellar. A mysterious place — that cellar. As a small boy I was seldom permitted to go down its stairs. It was dark, only one little window close up under the floor above, and it smelt earthy and damp and, when I was very little, a peep into its depths was rather scary. Occasionally, during heavy rains or when the snow melted, it filled to the depth of a foot

or more with water and then, with the washtubs and empty firkins floating about in it, it became a sort of tank. Perishable articles were kept on shelves above high-water mark.

There was another cellar at the back of the house under what the family called the "rough room." Our house was long and low, and the rough room—it was just beyond the kitchen—was built out over a little slope. This other cellar—it was always referred to as the wood cellar—was, therefore, not under-ground. To get to it, we went out by the kitchen door, descended the bank and entered by a door on the ground level. There was nothing mysterious about the wood cellar; I was only too familiar with it. Dusky and earthy and, in winter, cold as the Arctic. Along each side of it were piles of wood cut in foot lengths, pine on one side and oak on the other. Those piles were, or at least were supposed to be, even and regular. If they were not, Aunt Mary or Grandmother called attention to the fact.

There are many things I should like to say about that wood cellar, but I must not say them now. It is time to bank up and we must get on with the job or it will be too late. Cyrenus is forking the seaweed from his truck-wagon this very minute.

I was not with him while he gathered this first load, but, as it is Saturday, I shall take pains to accompany him when he goes after the next one. He lets me ride on the seat with him. His truck-wagon is of the regulation Cape Cod shape and color. It was built by Zoeth Hammond, the local blacksmith and wheelwright, and every

bit of iron about it was hammered and wrought by Mr. Hammond's own hands on the anvil in his shop down at the corner.

That blacksmith shop was a fascinating place for us youngsters. Unique, different from any other place in town. To stand there, amid the scraps of iron and hoof-parings and litter of odds and ends on the floor, and watch Zoeth as, leather-aproned and bare-armed, he pumped at the bellows and drew white-hot metal from the forge, was an unforgettable experience, one that repetition did not stale. It does seem to us grownups that Cape Cod boys lost much when Father Time tossed the blacksmith shop into the discard.

Cyrenus Small's truck-wagon was painted blue, of course. I cannot remember ever having seen a Cape truck-wagon that was not blue. Someone has said that in England tea is part of established religion. On Cape Cod in our young days to paint a truck-wagon or a tipcart any other color than blue, and just the right shade of blue, would have been rank heresy. Of course, you understand the difference between a tipcart and a truck-wagon. The former had two wheels and the latter four. Both had removable side boards set in iron sockets and sometimes were fitted with shafts for a horse or with a pole for a pair of oxen.

Cyrenus, with me beside him on the wooden seat, drives the old horse along the main road and steers him into the lane leading down to the shore. It is about three o'clock on an overcast, gray day in early November and the sun is hidden by clouds. The long stretch of

beach is lonely and deserted. The bathhouses in their straggling row, raw and unpainted, are locked and nailed fast. There are only a few gulls and their rasping cries add to the lonesomeness. If it were not for Mr. Small's conversation, one might be sorry one came.

But Mr. Small talks continually; he always does that, whether alone or in company. He is a queer bird, Cyrenus. Lives all alone in a little house away up on the Punk-horn Road and there are all sorts of stories told about him.

Grandmother remembered that, when he was a lad in the "downstairs" school, the teacher asked the children if they knew what was meant by the summit of a mountain. Cyrenus held up his hand; *he* knew. "Where is the summit?" asked Teacher. "Halfway up," declared Cyrenus, with the pride of certainty.

The boys in his neighborhood tormented him a good deal. He was accustomed to carry in his truck-wagon a long rope for use in lashing heavy loads. The boys, led by one older individual who "went mackereling" in the summer months, borrowed this rope one night and spliced the ends together, the older boy doing the splicing so neatly that the joining was scarcely discernible. About nine the next morning, so the story goes, a neighbor found Cyrenus seated in the truck-wagon, pulling the loop of rope around and around through his hands and talking to himself.

"What's the matter, Cy?" asked the neighbor.

Cyrenus looked up. "Some of them everlastin' young ones," he sputtered, "have gone to work and cut the end clean off my cart rope."

He was a kindly old soul, however, and it was fun to ride with him and hear him talk. He pulls the old horse to a standstill — it did not require much of a pull — takes a rake and pitchfork from the body of the truck-wagon and jumps to the sand. I was at liberty to jump or remain on the seat. So far as I can remember, I always jumped.

The seaweed lay in windrows, long ridges just above tide mark. The highest tides had left it there and the surface of the ridges had dried almost gray in the sun. Cyrenus, still muttering or singing, rakes it into heaps. Then, when there are a sufficient number of these heaps, he lets down the tailboard of the blue truck-wagon and pitchforks the weed aboard. Meanwhile, the sun has sunk lower, the clouds are heavier, there is just a band of golden light trimming the watery western skyline. The gulls' screaming is lonelier than ever. Home is not such a bad place to think about. The dining-room and sitting-room will be warm and the lamplight cheery.

When, at last, we drive into the yard, Cyrenus dumps this load of seaweed beside the other on the garden side of the house.

"Wall, good night, sonny," he observed; "I'll be around Monday mornin' to do the bankin' — if I don't die."

He invariably added that proviso — "If I don't die." He pronounced it "doie", of course, or "doy-ie." Cape Codders will know how it sounded and outlanders must take my word for it. No spelling can do justice to *that* twang.

On Monday he was on hand and the banking-up



GATHERING SEAWEED FOR THE WINTER

began. Our house was built close to the ground. There was but a foot or less of underpinning showing between the grass and shingles. And the floors were laid with straight, grained, knotless pine boards, boards often more than two feet wide, which were so easy to procure in Great-grandfather's time and are so impossible to find now. Of course, there was a rough floor beneath, but that was rough indeed.

The city sojourner in the country gazes reverently at an old house, with its gambrel roof and windows with their tiny panes and its picturesque air of weather-beaten solidity, sighs and observes, "Ah, they built them right in those days."

But, as a matter of fact, that is just what they did not do. The average old house in our section of rural New England, the smaller, unpretentious dwelling built one hundred years ago, was usually planned by the original owner and put together by neighbors who were farmers or fishermen two thirds of the year and carpenters only occasionally. They had good materials to work with, sturdy beams and planks and boards thoroughly dried; nails and latches and hinges hand-wrought and shingles hand-shaved. But in the assembling they were easily satisfied.

If a room which was intended to be square was, when finished, an inch or two wider at one end than at the other, they, apparently, were content to let it go at that. If those windows with the dear little panes did not work well in their guides and stuck at one end and rattled at the other, it was too bad, but couldn't be helped. If

the space between the walls was narrow — well, to make it wider would have required heavier joists and, therefore, have cost too much money. If a joint did not come together as it should, it would “do well enough.” The house, when finished, was simple and charming and is even more so, now that years have ripened it, but to assert that it is better built than the modern house is, generally speaking, an error. Its materials were better, but its construction — no.

At least, this is what architects and contractors tell us and, having “made over” a number of those old houses, they appear to speak from knowledge.

This, however, is just another digression and has nothing to do with Mr. Cyrenus Small and his cartloads of seaweed. It helps to explain why the seaweed was needed, that is all.

Cyrenus pitchforked that seaweed all along the sides at one end of our house for a depth of about two feet, covering the sills and underpinning from the kitchen to the parlor, inclusive. He pounded it down with the pitchfork, talking and singing as he worked. I was at school, of course, but when I came home at noon for dinner, he had made much progress.

“Let ’er blow, boy,” he told me. “There won’t much wind git through that, now hear *me* cackle. You and your folks’ll be thankful to me ’long about the middle of next February — yes, sir-ee! Got to fetch another load, though. Have you all banked up by tomorrow, sartin — if I don’t die.”

He did not die and the banking-up was finished. His

work was done, but mine had just begun, not only at school, but there at home.

Somewhere along at the beginning of this chapter I mentioned the wood cellar at the rear of our house, and stated that I was only too familiar with it. That was true even in summer, for the cooking was done with wood. The fire in the range — excuse me, the cookstove; whoever heard of a range in that locality at that day? — was laid with kindling and chunks of pitch pine. Then, after it was well under way, a stick of oak was added. Pine for a quick fire, oak for a slow one, that was the custom.

Sometimes, to help with the kindling, a little “poverty grass” was added. Poverty grass? Why, it grows in great profusion on the bare hillsides in certain parts of the Cape. A sort of low, heathery plant, grayish green, as I remember. It has a botanical name, I suppose, but no one ever called it anything but poverty grass. It was gathered and dried and, when it was thoroughly dry, burned with a crackle.

In the kitchen, beside the cookstove, was an affair that was my particular detestation. It was in my sole charge and how I loathed it! Bad enough in summer — vacation time — to have to go down to that wood cellar and bring up armful after armful to dump into its maw; but on a winter morning, cold and raw and shivery — no, I have not forgotten my loathing and probably never shall. Twenty-five years or more ago I wrote some verses about that woodbox and, as they express my feelings toward it, they are reprinted here.

THE WOODBOX

It was kept out in the kitchen and was long and deep and
wide,
And the poker hung above it and the shovel stood beside,
And the big, black cookstove, grinning through its grate
from ear to ear,
Looked as if it really loved it like a brother, through the year.
Flowered oilcloth, tacked about it, all its cracks and knotholes
hid,
And a pair of leather hinges fastened on the heavy lid.
And there was no bottom *in* it, or at least it seemed that way
When the order came to fill it ere you ran outdoors to play.

When the days were long and lazy and the noons were hot and
still,
And the locust in the pear tree started up his planing mill,
And the drum beat of the breakers was a soothing, tempting
roll,
And you knew the "gang" was waiting by the brimming
swimming hole,
Louder than the locust's humming, louder than the breakers'
roar,
You could hear that woodbox screaming: "Come and fill me
up once more!"
How the old clock ticked and chuckled, as you let each arm-
ful drop,
Gloating: "Huh! Another minute — and you're nowhere near
the top!"

In the icy winter mornings, when the bed was snug and warm,
And the frosted windows tinkled 'neath the fingers of the
storm,
And your breath rose from the pillow in a smoky cloud of
steam,

Then that woodbox, grim and empty, came careering through
your dream.

Came and prodded at your conscience, shrieked in aggravating
glee:

"Would you like to sleep this morning? You get up and 'tend
to *me*."

Ah, how plain it is this minute — shed and barn and drifted
snow,

And the slabs of oak all waiting, piled and ready, in a row.

Never was a fishing frolic, never was a game of ball,
But that mean, provoking woodbox had to come and spoil it
all.

You might study at your lessons and 'twas full, and full to
stay,

But just start an Indian story and 'twas empty, right away.
Seems as if a spite was in it, and, although we might forget
All the other "chores" that plagued us, we can hate that wood-
box yet.

And when we look back at boyhood, shaking off the cares of
men,

Still it comes to spoil the picture, screaming: "Fill me up
again!"

The days grew shorter and shorter. The early twilights
more and more chill and dreary. The sunsets were mag-
nificent and the afterglow marvelous, with every roof
and spire and pine bough and bare twig silhouetted
against the flaming sky. But in those days we boys were
not greatly interested in afterglows and sunsets. By and
by there would be skating and, occasionally, "sliding
down hill"; but just now life seemed to be pretty much
a round of woodbox and school and school and woodbox,

with, on Saturdays, a session of raking and tidying the yard to make existence more of a burden.

Thanksgiving was a bright spot. Our family always ate Thanksgiving dinner at Great-uncle Jonathan's big house. Great-uncle Jonathan and Great-aunt Mary had three sons and four daughters. All were married and living in Boston or New York, but all came back to the old house for Thanksgiving and brought their children with them. At the last of those Thanksgiving reunions which I remember there were two great-grandchildren.

The folding doors between the back parlor and dining-room were opened wide and tables placed end to end. All, young and old, sat down to the feast. After a session of light appetizers, like soup and chicken pie, two large turkeys were brought in and deposited at either end of the row of tables. Great-uncle Jonathan carved one and Uncle Henry the other. After the turkeys came mince pies and pumpkin pies and plum puddings and fruit cake and frosted cake and fruit and nuts and goodness knows what. We youngsters used to leave the table between courses, go out of doors and run around the barn, the idea being that this exercise "shook down" what we had already devoured and made room for more.

The grownups did not bother to exercise; they stayed where they were. But they ate — oh, yes. No one worried about surplus poundage in those days. To be at least plump at middle or old age was nothing more than they expected, — the inevitable.

After dinner there were games in the sitting-room and

parlors: "Animal, vegetable or mineral?" "Consequences", "Stagecoach" and, sometimes, charades. Everyone, young and old, took part, though how they managed to do so, after that dinner, is a miracle to us, as we look back at it now.

Thanksgiving was a big day on Cape Cod in our youth, but when Mother was a girl it was bigger, much bigger — not one day alone, but half a dozen. Those were the times before youth went away to the cities. The young men went to sea and the young women married sea captains. When those captains had made and saved money sufficient, they bought or built houses in their native towns and retired to spend the remainder of their lives there.

Consequently, in Mother's girlhood, she had relatives scattered all along the main road. And at Thanksgiving time each household entertained. On Tuesday all the brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and cousins — all those on shore, that is — dined at Uncle Elkanah's. On Wednesday at Uncle Elijah's. Thursday — Thanksgiving Day — at Uncle Jonathan's. Friday at Aunt Sarah's. Saturday at the home of some other kinsman or kinswoman. And each host or hostess tried to provide a more bountiful spread than the other.

What they did when the week ended I do not know. Relapsed into torpor for the remainder of the winter, I should suppose.

Thanksgiving, at that period — the '30's, '40's and '50's — was the New England festival. Compared to it, Christmas played a minor second fiddle. But it was not so when

we were little. Thanksgiving was good then, but Christmas was better.

And after Christmas — well, then the winter was upon us in earnest. All sorts of weather, good, bad and very bad. The good and the very bad are remembered most clearly. A day after a big snowstorm, for example. Snow is, as I have said, more of a rarity on the Cape than inland in New England, but when it does come, it dresses the old sandspit up gloriously. And then, if the sun comes out and the following days are clear, Cape Cod is indeed “the place to be.”

The air is crystal clear, the sunshine is so bright and warm that a heavy coat is scarcely needed, the pines are trimmed with ermine, the hillsides glisten, the sea is blue. The horizon line, where water and sky meet, is as level as if drawn with a ruler. Every lightship, every distant sail, every scallop shanty on the beaches stands out in tiny detail. To walk along the shore, just out of reach of the leaping, sparkling surf, is an experience worth a hundred miles of travel to obtain.

But I must admit that it is not always like this; there are other days and nights and other sorts of experiences. You may recollect that we were careful not to say much about the wind when conversing with the visitor from Ohio. The wind does blow on Cape Cod. Yes, indeed, it does. In the summer we Capers brag about our cool breezes. In the winter we say little about them because they are quite capable of speaking for themselves. Out of the northeast or the northwest they come, over miles and miles of tossing, berg-dotted salt water, and when they

really settle down to business, their piercing breath mocks at temperature records. "Only fifteen above zero?" they seem to say. "Not really cold at all? Is that so! Well, *we'll* show you."

And the quahauger or oysterman, leaving home to go to his work in the morning, puts on heavy woolen underwear, two pairs of heavy woolen socks, a couple of heavy sweaters, thick trousers, hip boots, two pairs of mittens, a flannel-lined sou'wester which pulls down over his ears and the back of his head, and a leather jacket or oilskin over all. It is not cold — one has only to look at the thermometer to realize that; but, to that oysterman or quahauger, it *feels* cold, which is sufficient, thank you. He doesn't argue about it.

Those winter winds! How they used to howl and whine and shriek and whistle about the gables of our house when I went upstairs to my small bedroom or when I woke in the morning. At times only a mournful crooning, rising and sinking and whispering at the window. But, at other times, when what the old salts call a "three-day no'th-easter" was raging, then they did not croon, they howled. The window sash shook, the panes roared as the torrents of rain were thrown against them, the old house trembled, the bed quivered, the water pitcher on its stand in the corner tinkled against the basin. I ducked my tousled head under the layers of sheet, blanket, "crazy quilt", "log-cabin comforter" and "rising-sun comforter" and fell asleep in spite of the racket. But when I woke in the morning, with the storm as bad as ever, and remembered that woodbox — Br-r-r!

Those were the evenings when the sitting-room was a place hard to leave. The big gas-burner stove was hot and the firelight glittered behind the isinglass panes in its door; the lamplight was yellow and cozy, the rocking chair was comfortable and one was halfway through the most exciting chapter in "Frank in the Woods." To leave all this, pick up the little hand lamp and climb the narrow stairs to that bedroom was a trial.

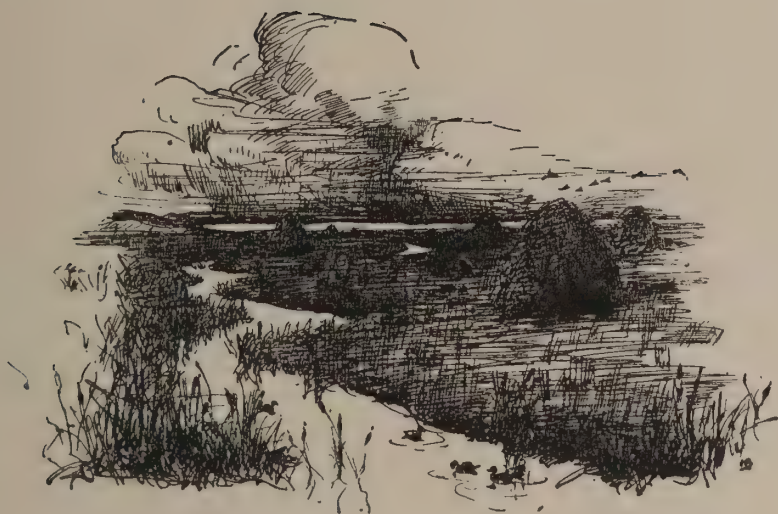
All the next day it rained and blew. We took picnic meals to school with us on days like those and that was something of an adventure. The mile-long walk to the schoolhouse was another. The thrashing trees, the walks and woods sprinkled with broken twigs and small branches, and puddles like miniature ponds, the struggles against the buffeting wind at exposed corners, the distant glimpses of the bay, all gray and white, the meeting with other boys and girls, each muffled to the eyes as you were. And, on rare occasions, when the storm was more than ordinarily severe, Captain Samuel Baker, Chairman of the School Committee, might enter, dripping and red-faced, to whisper in Teacher's ear. That meant "one session", home at one o'clock instead of four. Great excitement and subdued jubilation. Almost as exciting as that time when the Baptist Meeting-House was struck by lightning and Mr. Sabin — we were "upstairs" then and had a man teacher — rushed out to the fire and we all followed him and were free for an entire forenoon.

Those winter winds! Mr. Cyrenus Small's banking-up was a protection against them but it did not keep them out altogether. Often and often we have watched the

ingrain carpet in our dining-room lift and lift against its tacked edges and puff up in the middle like a tightly stretched sail, as the blasts seeped through the seaweed barrier and whistled under the beams and boards. I had not read "The Eve of St. Agnes" then — I probably should not have cared to read it or been permitted to do so if I had cared — but I have read it since.

"And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor."

Keats was not a Cape Codder, but he knew, didn't he? I wonder if they used to bank up for winter in Old England.





The Rude Forefathers



Not so very rude, perhaps.
In individual instances, of course, not rude at all. But
Gray's lines seemed to fit and so we borrow from them.

Each in his narrow cell forever laid
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

There are so many graveyards on Cape Cod. Perhaps
no more than in other localities dating back, as this
one does, to Colonial times, but still a great many. An
unnecessary number, one would say. There is always the
original graveyard, where the first settlers were buried;

that at Eastham is one of the earliest of these and that on the hilltop in Chatham Port another. And there are many more, usually behind or near where a meeting-house still stands or where one formerly stood.

But, as the settlements grew, the little graveyards and churchyards became crowded and it was necessary to find room elsewhere for the departed. This necessitated the setting apart of a tract of land as a burial place, and the majority of Cape communities were foresighted and broad-minded enough to make that tract a community graveyard, a "town cemetery", where any resident, no matter what his or her religious faith, might buy and own a lot.

The majority, but not all. In some sections the Puritan Cape Codder's intolerance of his neighbor's creed extended beyond this mortal life. He was so certain that the doctrines upheld by his own sect were right, and so just as certain that those of his neighbor were wrong, that he would not take the risk of being buried beside him. He might live near him and associate with him — yes, even vote as he did and be in complete agreement with him in worldly matters; but when it came to risking his hope of salvation by stepping inside the door of that neighbor's house of worship, or by entombment inside the same fence, that was too great a hazard.

So, in the communities where this state of feeling prevailed, each religious sect had its own graveyard. In at least one Cape town today there is a Methodist graveyard and a Congregationalist graveyard and a Baptist graveyard and a Universalist graveyard. Call them grave-

yards or burying grounds or cemeteries, as you prefer; the fact remains that there are four of them. If it were to be done over again, in the present state of tolerance, there would undoubtedly be but one "town cemetery" — but now is not then.

The old churchyard behind the First Meeting-House had ceased to be used years before my generation was born. Our town had its town cemetery and it was rather thickly populated, even in the days when I was young and used to walk there with Mother on pleasant Sunday afternoons in summer. Going to the cemetery on Sunday afternoon was a regular habit in our household.

It may have been because Father had been dead such a little while, and Grandfather but a few years. Or it may have been a village custom. Certainly there were always other widows at that cemetery on Sundays beside Mother and Grandmother, and other boys beside myself. The grownups usually carried flowers to be placed on the graves, old-fashioned posies from the home gardens.

I remember so well those mile-long walks across the fields to the lower road where the cemetery is located. We turned in through Captain Elijah Paine's yard and followed the path which began between his barn and henhouses. If the barn door were open, we could hear the horses stamping in their stalls and catch a whiff of the warm, leathery smell from the harness room and carriage houses; Captain Paine was "well off" and kept, not only a "horse-and-team", but a "span", which was grandeur indeed.

The path wound over the low hills behind the barn.

From the hilltop the view was extensive. Below us was the Paine cranberry swamp, trimly diked and ditched and neatly kept, its acre or two of green vines glistening in the sunshine. Beyond it was the pine grove by Bangs' Pond, where on a weekday one might catch pickerel if one were lucky, and perch and hornpout at any time, whether lucky or not.

You will notice I specified "on a week day." To go fishing on a Sunday was not done, that is all. Looking backward from the present easy-going Sabbaths, with their golf and baseball and moving pictures, the tendency may be to overstress the strict regulations guarding those of half a century ago. It may be that certain abandoned outcasts, careless of earthly reputation and heedless of the threat of a sulphurous future, did fish on Sunday within the limits of our town, but if so I never heard of them. And considering that ours was not a large town and that the affairs of its inhabitants, no matter how private and personal, were more or less public property and subjects for discussion at sewing circle and at the post-office, I think I should have heard if it had happened.

I heard of instances of Sabbath breaking in other communities. And of their consequences. For example: In one town not far from ours a certain eminence overlooking the ocean is called locally, "Wicked Hill." There are various traditions concerning the origin of this name but, although they vary in certain details, they agree in the main. Some time in the '50's or '60's a minister in one of the meeting-houses noticed a slight falling off in his congregation on pleasant Sunday mornings in summer.

Whereas in the winter or on rainy Sabbaths pews were filled from end to end, there were, on these clear, summer forenoons, a few empty seats.

He investigated and discovered that the absentees — they were young, most of them — instead of attending divine service with the respectable and devout, had formed the habit of strolling along the lane leading to this little hill and walking up and down there, looking off at the blue sea and the long lines of breakers, the dipping and rising gulls and the scores of white sails.

The Sunday following this discovery he preached a sermon giving those backsliders “what for”, as our English friends might term it. He pointed out that the lane was the broad path leading to destruction and the hill itself a suburb of Sodom and Gomorrah.

The modern name for that lane as painted on the signboard at the corner where it joins the main street is “Sea View Avenue”, but the old resident still refers to it as “Wicked Hill Road.” And the knoll with its hotel and cottages is still “Wicked Hill.”

But I have been rambling again, and not in the direction of the cemetery. Mother and I, on those Sunday-afternoon walks, followed the path by the end of Bangs’ Pond, where it wound between the latter and the cranberry swamp. The air was sweet there, heavy with the scent of swamp azalea and spice bush, with an occasional breath from the water-lilies in the pond cove. Later on, in August, the high-bush blueberries would ripen along that path and, later still, in early October, the wild-grape clusters hang amid the vines. Mother and Aunt Mary and Grandmother made jelly and jam from those grapes,

as they made jelly from the beach plums in September.

Beyond, where the path emerged from between the bushes and widened, there were several "peat holes", the water black as tar and with the black fibrous mud which the peat makers had dug spread in layers on the grass, to dry in the sun. Those layers were marked off in little squares, just as you would mark homemade candy in the pan before it cooled. I wonder if anyone on the Cape burns peat now. Probably not; at least, I do not remember having seen a peat hole for years. But then it was a common fuel. You started your fire in the coal stove with wood and, after it was well alight, added the chunks of peat. Peat was cheap and made a fairly good fire to cook by, but, heavens alive, how it would smoke!

The path ended, a hundred yards or so farther on, at the cedar-rail fence edging the lower road. There was a "pair of bars" where the path ended and it was my privilege to take down the upper bar so that the "women folks" might get over easily. The graveyard was but a little way up the road.

Ours was, as we have said, a town cemetery. All denominations were buried there. Its walks were shaded with pitch pine and the lots were, many of them, decorated with old-fashioned flowers, moss roses and old-maid's pinks, and with myrtle and ivy clambering amid and over the graves.

While Mother arranged the flowers she had brought and placed them on Father's and Grandfather's graves, I wandered about, reading the inscriptions on the tombstones. Even then, as I remember, I was impressed by the number of stones erected in memory of those "Lost at

Sea." They were everywhere; it seemed as if at least every other lot had one of them and sometimes more than one. Ours was a seagoing town, remember, a "square-rigged" town, and its sons had sailed over all the wet places of the earth and many of them had left their bones beneath the deep waters.

Now that I am older, very much older, and have visited many Cape Cod graveyards, I realize that the "Lost at Sea" memorials were not at all peculiar to this one. Those stones are everywhere, in every cemetery in Barnstable County.

And the youth of those drowned mariners whom they commemorate!

In the old graveyard at Truro is one stone inscribed as follows:

In Memory of

DANIEL CASSIDY

*Drowned, April 20, 1852, in Attempting to Rescue the Crew
of the Ill-fated Barque Josepha, from Rochester, England.*

Aged 23 yrs.

And beneath, on the same stone:

ANDREW CASSIDY

Drowned, April 26, 1846

Aged 16 yrs.

And beneath this again:

TIMOTHY CASSIDY

Drowned in the Bay of Cheluel

October 3, 1851

Aged 18 yrs.

THE RUDE FOREFATHERS 119

Three brothers, presumably, all sailors and all lost at sea, the oldest but twenty-three!

In the cemetery at Harwich Centre is a stone bearing these two inscriptions:

In Memory of

CAPTAIN JOSIAH UNDERWOOD

*Lost at sea on his passage from New York to Port Cabello,
March, 1854
Aged 34*

And:

JOSEPH UNDERWOOD

*Lost at Sea on His Passage from Central America in Ship
Albert Henry, Probably Near Cape Horn,
September, 1847
Aged 22*

These are but samples of, literally, hundreds. Cape Cod's sacrifice of its boys to "old devil sea" can only be fully brought to one's realization by a tour of its cemeteries.

And not only its sons but its daughters. Eighteen-year-old wives accompanied their twenty-one-year-old husbands when the latter had risen to the dignity and responsibility of captain, and they, too, in many instances, were never heard from after the vessel left port.

In Memory of

MRS. BETHIAH

*Wife of Captain Seth Paine
Lost on Passage from New York
1841*

There are scores like that.

The old churchyards are often shaded by venerable trees and, where the meeting-house still stands like a guardian above its graves, are not lonely and forbidding. The newer "town cemeteries", most of them, are well laid out and planted. But some of the early graveyards are bleak and bare indeed. That at Eastham is a specimen. Even the new iron fence, with its granite posts, which now surrounds the half acre or so of ground, only emphasizes its bareness. Not a tree nor a shrub. Merely a plot of rough pasture land dotted, hit or miss, with crumbling slate tablets.

In that graveyard, however, lie some of the Cape's first families. The ancestor of all the Doanes in this country is there. So is the first Freeman, Major John, buried in 1719, and who was ninety-eight years old when he died. And his wife, Marcy, who died in 1711 at the age of eighty. And their son, Lieutenant Edmund. And the Reverend Samuel Treat, who was the first minister in that section. His tombstone — it has been removed to the Orleans Public Library for preservation — pays tribute to his "laborious travail for ye soules of ye Indian natives." Tradition says that he was borne to his grave, amid a howling northeast snowstorm in February, by relays of his Indian converts to Christianity. A real man as well as a pious clergyman, the Reverend Treat. It was owing to his labors and influence, so they tell us, that the Cape Cod Indians refused to join King Philip in the latter's war against the whites.

There is one old graveyard farther down the Cape, in



THE OLD GRAVEYARD AT TRURO

which the writer wandered for an hour or more recently, and which, as a picture of bleak loneliness, stands out in his memory. It is on the top of a barren hill, not a tree nor a bush within its borders, the nearest house at least half a mile distant. One wonders why that desolate spot should have been selected as a burial place. As he saw it at late afternoon of a November day, with the sun low down in the west, the broad expanse of bay cold and forbidding, a chill wind stirring the dead grasses amid the graves and the slate stones cocked hither and thither, it was indeed a grim reminder of the futility of worldly strivings.

The inscriptions and epitaphs were not helps to cheerfulness. Who was originally responsible for the poetical gems which our forefathers seemed to consider the crowning touch to the perfect tombstone? Many of them were, of course, quotations from "Watts' Hymns", that collection of sacred and dismal verse of which our Puritan ancestors were so fond; but it has also been suggested that the undertaker or the stone-cutter must have kept a collection of those ghastly effusions on hand and offered them to the mourners for their selection.

Here was, of course, the old favorite, imported from England in the beginning, but to be found in practically every old cemetery from Maine to Georgia.

Pause, stranger, pause as ye pass by.
As ye are now so once was I.
As I am now so ye shall be,
Prepare for death, and follow me.

That was there, not only in the original, but with ever so many variations, principally in the first line.

“As ye pass by pray cast an eye.”
Or, “Pray Christian reader, cast an eye.”

But sometimes like this:

I had my part of worldly care
When I was living as ye are.
But God from it has set me free
And as I am so ye shall be.

Or again:

Death is a debt to nature due.
As I have paid it so must you.

And, in one instance, the reminder that:

Friends nor physicians could not save
My mortal body from the grave.

After a sojourn with the poets it was almost a relief to read:

In memory of

ABRAHAM CONN

*Who was killed in an encounter with the natives of the
Feejee Islands in the year 1812.*

Abraham Conn, too, was but a youth, only 24.
In this graveyard we read of one who:

“Smiled, exhaled and went to Heaven.”

And of another:

"Virtuous consort of Peleg Blank, who expired in a fit of apoplexy in the year 1781."

The stone adds the caution, "Be ye also ready."

Another "pious and virtuous consort" died in 1801 and the person who erected the stone, presumably her husband, caused to be engraved upon it, instead of the usual gruesome quatrain, the simple but poignant statement: *"Quiet at last."*

In the Harwich Centre graveyard is an interesting inscription:

Mr. Samuel Cash
Died December 23, 1847
Aged 89
I inlisted under Washington,
The battle fought the victory won.

I have an idea that old Mr. Cash was himself responsible for that couplet, spelling and all. The aged veteran had fought in the Revolutionary War and was proud of the fact.

There are several examples of the "donated" memorial. "This stone erected by his uncle." Or, "John Brown caused this stone to be placed here." Liberality of this kind is not of the shy type. There is no question of not letting the right hand know what the left hand is doing. The idea is, apparently, to make sure that *all* hands are informed.

One stone, however, was unique. Beneath the name and date, and in letters almost as large, we read: "Higgins and Jones, Boston, Mass." Presumably the name and address of the dealers who supplied the stone. It reminded me of the inscription said to be in an English graveyard.

Here lies the body of William Sears,
A draper in this town for years.
Now, in the shop below the hill,
His son keeps up the business still.

This is said to be "the advertising age." Apparently there were some good advertisers among our forefathers.

The names in those old burying grounds are interesting—to me, at least. There is one critic who has objected to the Christian names in my Cape Cod novels and stories. He insists that those names are, for the most part, the author's own invention. There never were, so he maintains, such names on the Cape or anywhere else.

Well, I wish I might conduct that critic through a few of these graveyards. In one—and I was not "name hunting" either, but merely seeking unusual inscriptions—I casually picked up the following in something less than ten minutes:

"Bashua, widow of Jeptha." "Theophilus, son of Veranus."
"Levi and Asenath." "Tamisen." "Diadama." "Bathsheba."
"Tryphenia." "Sabra." "Aruna." "Shubel." "Susa."

These, beside the usual assortment of Jedidiahs and Sophronias and Jeremiahs and Calebs and Solomons and Elkanahs and the like.

Yes, I should enjoy leading that critic into that cemetery. I might go so far as to state that I should enjoy leading him into any cemetery, but I forbear. It would not be true, anyway. I bear no grudge and I hope he doesn't.





Gunning



IN England, if we may judge by the English novels, it is always called "shooting." Lord Dumley, of Dumley Towers, Nutting-Mutch, near Nutting Moor, Bucks, invites his friends for a week's shooting on his estate, or over his covers, whatever they are. Down on the Cape we invite our friends to go gunning with us. That is, we do if we are gunners. If we are not, we invite them to go fishing.

The last two sentences of the above paragraph are written with feeling. I may as well confess, here at the beginning, that I am not a gunner. A gun — except occasionally on the Fourth of July — is not associated with memories of my own Cape Cod yesterdays. This does not

mean that I have a grudge against the weapon or the sport in which it is used. It does mean that, in my boyhood on the Cape, I never owned a gun and that, later on, when I came back on vacations I was almost never there in the gunning season. So I have not contracted the habit.

This is really the artist's chapter. He should have written it. That artist — why, he is a little unbalanced on the subject! He will turn out — get up, of course I mean — at five o'clock on a November morning cold enough to freeze the water in the teakettle on a hot stove, array himself in layer upon layer of underclothes, overclothes, sweaters, socks, stockings, boots, cap, and leather jacket, tramp down to the beach, meet a pair of congenial fellow-lunatics like himself, row two miles to the outer beach and there sit, shaking and shivering, in a "blind", waiting for something or other to come along that he can shoot at. And if, five or six hours later, he can come home bringing a frozen duck or two, he is happy. He thinks he has had a good time. Is that rational amusement? Is it?

Now, of course, I, myself, will turn out at four o'clock any morning in September to sail or motor-boat ten miles down to the Point and try for bluefish. Bluefish, you understand, are supposed to bite best just at sunrise. I admit that they do not always do that, and, also, that there are mornings when the sun is quite invisible at its rising; when there is a cold, heavy fog or a rain, or something of the sort, and fishermen return empty-handed and — well, slightly damp and chilled. But bluefishing is *fun*; any sane person will agree to that. Whereas —

Do not get the notion that I am prejudiced. I indignantly deny the allegation. The friends who go fishing with me will tell you that I am very broad-minded and tolerant. They had better tell you so, if they expect to be invited to go on another bluefishing cruise. Prejudiced? The idea!

My own earliest memory even remotely connected with guns and gunning is of a November evening. It must have been at least sixty years ago, for I was a very, very little fellow. Seven or eight o'clock it was, dark and chill. We had finished supper and were in the sitting-room, when Mother called to me. She was standing at the open door — the side door — of our house and, when I came in answer to her call, she took my hand and led me out into the yard.

"Listen," she said.

It was cold, out there in the yard, and dark and very lonely. Not a breath of wind, which is unusual in November on the Cape. Not the rattle of a twig, not the rumble of a distant wheel — absolute stillness. I shivered and held tightly to her hand.

"Listen!" she said again.

I listened. And then, from far up in the blackness overhead, faint and eerie and strange and unearthly, there came a cry, or a succession of cries.

"Honk! Honk! Honk!"

"Those are the wild geese flying over," said Mother. "They are moving south. That means cold weather is coming, or so they say."

I have never forgotten that night, — the cold and the

dark and those weird cries coming from far, far above. In every adult's memories of early childhood there must be certain lighted points, often — yes, usually — connected with events quite inconsequential in themselves, which stand out, oddly clear, from the general dimness. The first time I heard the call of the wild geese is to me one of those lighted points. It was just an incident, but I remember it so very plainly.

Another memory — I was older then — is of old Mr. Baker, who used to call at our house occasionally in the fall. Mr. Baker was, I suspect, although I did not know it at the time, what used to be called a "market gunner." He would come to the back door and Mother or Grandmother or Aunt Mary sometimes bought a black duck or a coot of him. Then we had roast duck or a coot stew.

Now a great many people will tell you that a coot is not fit to eat. They say he tastes the way an old fish net smells. But they never ate a coot stew made as Grandmother used to make it. She used to parboil the coot first — I am almost sure she did that — and then she cut him up and put him in the kettle along with potatoes and onions and dumplings — Cape Cod dumplings as big as your fist, and light and puffy, not chunks of pasty dough such as you get with your chicken stew nowadays in a restaurant. Those dumplings never gave us indigestion; so far as that goes, I cannot remember ever having had indigestion in those happy days. Amazing how cooking has degenerated, isn't it?

I used to like coot stew then. Whether I should like it now is another one of those questions which perhaps it

is safer not to put to the test. I do know that coot stew was a favorite dish at the gunning-club camps. An old chap who used to cook and guide at one of those club camps explained to me just how he made it. He parboiled *his* coot, cut him into "hunks", as he described it, and then built up the concoction layer upon layer; a layer of coot, a layer of potatoes, a layer of dumplings, a layer of onions, more coot, and so on, till the kettle was full.

"Eat?" he rhapsodized. "They ate until I was scairt there wouldn't be none left for me. Liked it? You'd think so if you could have watched 'em wade into it. But then, them fellows, when they come in from the stands, was ready to eat anything. Yes," reflectively, "and drink anything, too."

Another delicacy, so he said, which was always served in that camp once a season, was a sandpeep pie. It took scores and scores of the tiny sandpipers to make one pie for half a dozen hungry men. Only the breast meat was used, I believe. The sandpiper is protected by law nowadays and so "peep pie" is no longer on the gunner's bill of fare.

A half century ago the Cape Cod beaches and marshes were alive with wild fowl in the season. The market gunner had his innings then. There were no game laws and no game wardens. The market gunner shot as many birds as he could and disposed of them in the cities at fixed prices. His gun was the old-fashioned muzzle-loading eight or ten-inch gauge, and the user loaded his own shells. The prices, so one veteran gunner informs me, ran something like this:

For black ducks, \$1.50 a pair. For a Canada goose, \$1.00. Coots, ten cents each. For Black-Breasted Plover or "Beetle Heads" — these were shore birds, of course — fifty cents each. "Yellow Legs", another variety of shore bird, about the same. As the winter wore on, and the days grew colder, the ducks grew thinner. The price then declined until it reached a minimum of fifty cents per duck.

The market gunner plucked his birds before shipping them and the feathers, too, were sold. The prevailing price for goose and duck feathers was, at that time, fifty cents a pound. The veteran who furnished this information was one of four brothers, all gunners, and in that family each son saved a part of the feathers from his birds and handed them over to his mother. As her four sons grew up and married, she presented each one of them, on his wedding day, with a feather bed made with her own hands.

On the lower Cape, from Harwich to Provincetown, the market gunner of fifty years ago did most of his winter shooting from an "ice blind." Along the outer beaches and marshy islands, where the salt water had frozen, blocks of ice were cut and the blind — that is, the screen behind which the gunners crouched — was built of those ice blocks, one piled on the other, Eskimo igloo fashion. The occupants of an ice blind were accustomed to don white cotton or canvas suits, put on over their various other layers of clothing. Then the wild fowl were supposed not to notice the difference between the ice and the persons sitting behind it. On occasions, or so I have been given to understand, there was not a

great deal of difference — one was almost as cold as the other.

Cold? Why, those gunners used to set out from their homes at five in the morning and return after dark in the evening. They might be, and doubtless were, hungry by noon, or later, but that was part of the business. No use in carrying a dinner pail, for the food was sure to freeze in a few hours. The more fortunate gunner of today carries hot soup, and other things, in thermos bottles, but there were no thermos bottles then. The old-time duck shooter tightened his belt and thought about the good things he would eat and drink when he got home — if he ever did get there.

The men of the Life-saving Service used to add to their limited incomes by doing a little market gunning on the side, in their off-duty hours, or even sometimes while on beach patrol. The others, the regular market gunners, did not approve of this, however, and, after a time, the Government forbade the practice. Why should a life-saver need more money, anyway? He was receiving the princely salary of sixty dollars a month.

According to my friend, the veteran, the best gunning on Cape Cod was at Monomoy Point and on the marshes at Barnstable and West Barnstable and those at Orleans and Eastham. The marsh "blinds", particularly those at the Barnstables, were made of old fence rails and salt hay. There were hundreds of cedar-rail fences in those days and salt hay grew profusely in all the marshes. Everyone knows what salt hay is like. It is the coarse marsh grass cut and dried in the sun. On the Barnstable

marshes even now one may see the haycocks scattered here and there. Salt hay has a fragrance and a flavor all its own. So, too, has the milk from a cow that has eaten it. It — the hay, of course — is used principally for stable and barn bedding for horses and cattle.

The market gunner on the marshes built the frame of his blind with the split cedar rails lifted, with or without permission, from the nearest fence. Then, in and out and over and between the rails, he laced salt hay, taken from the nearest stacks — also with or without permission. The hay blind was the best for marsh shooting.

And, in those yesterdays, there were, beside the market gunners, a vast army of what the latter scoffingly termed “soft” gunners. The soft gunner was the fellow who shot, not in order to make a living by the sale of his game, but for the fun and glory there was in it. He was a “sportsman”, that fellow. All sportsmen were not “soft” gunners, of course. The great majority were not. There was on the Cape — and still is, although in a more limited number — a large group who, like the artist, actually seem to enjoy sitting in a blind and freezing to death. But the bona-fide soft gunner was not, nor is not, one of these fanatics. No, sir, he knew, or knows, a trick worth two of that.

He was the chap who came down to the Goose Club or the Coot Club or the Sportsman’s Retreat, or whatever it was, for the week-end. There were genuine sportsmen in those clubs, plenty of them, but the gunning they did was not “soft.” They went out morning after morning, cool or cold, dry or wet, and shot or hoped to shoot. The

soft gunner — mind you, I am not responsible for these statements, although they come from supposedly authoritative, if perhaps biased, sources — the soft gunner spent the greater part of his time in the warm clubhouse. He played cards, he ate — merciful heavens, *how* he ate! And he drank — oh, yes, he drank. Then, when his holiday was over, he bought a bunch of ducks or geese, or what-not, from a native gunner and went back to the city to display his game and brag of his marksmanship. So they say; let us hope it isn't true.

There were, and still are to an extent, a number of gunning clubs along the Cape beaches. The Brant Club on Monomoy Beach is one. Then, forty years ago, the Gunner's Hotel, on the beach opposite where the Chatham Life-saving Station now stands, was a favorite resort in the fall. My sporting friends — the real sportsmen we are talking about now, of course, not the "soft gunners" — tell me many yarns of the wonderful times and the wonderful shooting at the Brant Club or the Gunner's Hotel. The Brant Clubhouse still stands and is in use during the gunning season, but the old hotel passed out long ago. The ocean tides and storms were chiefly responsible for its passing. One fall it stood fifty yards away from the surf; the following spring the breakers were shooting their spray over its front porch. That is a sample of the way the Cape coast in that section changes. The hotel was moved still farther back, but within a year it was again in danger and was abandoned. It burned down finally, I believe.

The sportsmen of the yesterdays were driven from the

railway station to the club and gunning shanties in the old-time "depot wagons." Beside the larger buildings just mentioned, there were numbers of privately owned shacks, equipped with straw bunks and ancient cook-stoves. They were in use, of course, only during the late autumn and early winter, and were closed and empty the rest of the year. Consequently the stoves rusted, the rust ate holes in the stovepipes, and the blankets in the bunks grew moldy. But what are a little rust and more or less mold to a chronic sufferer from *Gun-itis*? Nothing at all. They are like a little rain to a fisherman; help to make him feel that he is getting his money's worth, that is all.

They burned driftwood in those old stoves and, sometimes, when the wind was from the wrong direction, a back-draught developed. Then the occupants of the shanty rushed outdoors, rubbing their eyes and coughing, and cooked and ate their meals in the open until the wind changed. Early each morning they were off to the various blinds, where they banged away until dinner time.

These private camps were usually looked after and the cooking done by one of the neighborhood market gunners. His charge was about five dollars a day, and, in certain instances, he provided food for the party without extra charge.

If one can get the market gunner of yesterday talking, he will tell you many stories of the city greenhorn and his performances alongshore or on the marshes. He will enjoy telling them, too, and his sulphurous comments are as interesting as the yarns themselves. Here is one.

The hero was a young fellow who came to the village

in the ducking season. He was not equipped for the sport, but he overcame that obstacle by borrowing a gunning float, a gun and one live decoy duck. They told him where, at the marshy edge of one of the inlets, he might find game. He rowed to that spot, put out his lone decoy, anchored his float and prepared for slaughter. The decoy was what the townsman who had lent it to him called a "first-class quacker." The decoy quacked and swam about and the gunner crouched and shivered and waited.

His wait was not a long one. In from the sea and down toward him swooped a tremendous flock of wild fowl. It was such a huge flock that, in his frenzy of excitement, he forgot to take aim, but blazed away in the direction of everything in general. The wild fowl clamorously soared to safety, but the gunner, peeping out over the edge of his float, was thrilled by the sight of a dead duck. He had actually killed something with his very first shot. He had, but it was the decoy he had borrowed. The "first-class quacker" was noisy no longer, but its owner was talkative later on.

Another yarn, spun by this same professional, was, so he said, but one of many similar ones: "Any old-timer can tell you a half a dozen like it." The experienced gunner is established in his perfectly hidden blind. His decoys, trained birds and valuable, are swimming about. All is quiet; no sign of game as yet. And then, from a patch of tall reeds to the right and rear, come two thunderous "Bangs!" followed by a yell of exultation. The greenhorn, shooting "on his own", has crept up, seen this glorious bunch of ducks just ahead of him and has killed three of



GUNNING ON THE MARSHES

the best. The scene which follows is almost too painful to describe. A blue haze hangs over the blind during the ensuing conversation. The greenhorn slinks away, poorer in pocket and with hopes and ambition sadly punctured, and the owner of the slain decoys mops his forehead and wonders if there is any especially fitting phrase he has forgotten to use.

The Cape Cod market gunner of yesterday also shot upland birds for the market—quail, partridge, snipe, woodcock, golden plover, “marsh quail” and an occasional pheasant. In our grandfathers’ time there were wild pigeons on the Cape in the season. The upland gunner owned at least one well-trained pointer or setter dog and, sometimes, “rabbit hounds” and deer hounds.

A great deal of the fall gunning in Barnstable County has been, and still is, done along the sandy shores of the fresh-water ponds. Nowadays there is scarcely a pond of any considerable size which does not have gunning camps or stands or blinds about it. Many of the larger camps are very comfortable indeed; some are luxurious, with well-fitted sleeping rooms, shower baths, adequate heat, electric lights and all the “fixings.” The clubhouse or camp sits a little way back from the shore, amid the scrub oak and pine woods, and the blinds before it are elaborately built and screened with pine boughs and grass. This is gunning *de luxe*. No freezing here and no suffering from hunger—or thirst, either.

The geese and ducks moving south, in their long migration, pass over these ponds and, from their lofty altitude, look down and see other geese and ducks swimming

about, apparently feeding and happy and contented. The leader of the flock decides to descend and join them. Looks like a good place to rest and "mug up", as the fisherman used to call dining. So he swoops down and the flock follow him. As they near the happy little feathered group below, the latter quack and honk a vociferous welcome. "Come in, fellows; the water's fine."

Ah, well! Benedict Arnold was a brave man and a good general, but he did sell out to the enemy; there is no getting around that. Those geese and ducks feeding and quacking just off that beach are like the "come-on men" in the crowd around the shell game at an old-time circus; they are there to entice the "sucker." As the flock is just about to alight, from behind the innocent-appearing stretch of greenery bordering the shore bursts forth a cannonade. After that there remains nothing but to count the victims and bring in the scalps.

The raising of live decoys is a specialized industry in our county. Some individuals go into it quite extensively. They raise large flocks and keep them in pens and enclosures on their property, ready for the opening of the gunning season. Others have half a dozen or perhaps two or three. The decoy's wings are clipped so that he cannot fly — at least, so I have been told, and I presume that innate depravity is responsible for his treacherous disposition.

But, beside the live decoy, and often with him, is the imitation, the manmade, wooden decoy. Sometimes he looks as much like a duck or a goose as he does like anything else; and that is about all one can say for him. A

painted block of wood, which would float in the proper position and with a knob-like head at one end and a pointed stern, — that was the old-fashioned decoy. Why on earth a wild fowl with even a scrap of intelligence ever cared to approach — to say nothing of associating with — such a crude caricature is beyond comprehension. Probably curiosity was the prompting motive. “What kind of a thing *is* that? Let’s go down and see.” It was curiosity that killed the cat, you remember, and no doubt it has killed a few million geese, brant, and ducks.

But, although the crude, old-time decoy still is used, it is no longer necessary to use him. The modern wooden decoy, if he is intended to look like a goose, does look like one. If he is intended to look like a duck, like a duck he looks. And, I believe — yes, I am sure — that, in our part of New England at least, the credit for this change from a caricature to a portrait is due to one man, Elmer Crowell.

I am breaking my rule in this case and using a real name instead of an invented one. Praise to whom praise is due. Elmer Crowell is, I am proud to say, a good friend. He and his work are known East, West, South and North, so he does not need advertising and, therefore, I may talk about him here without fear of being credited with an ulterior motive.

Elmer has “gunned”, not only from one end of the Cape to the other, but in many other sections. In his earlier years he guided and cooked and cared for many and many a party of real sportsmen. He knows all about gunning and fishing and out-of-door life generally. And he

knows about birds, not game kinds only, but songbirds as well.

Elmer has always had a "knack" for wood-carving. His is more than a knack really; it is a gift, a genius. So it was natural enough for him to dislike the crude decoys he and his fellow gunners, and their fathers before them, were accustomed to use and to wonder why they had not been replaced by better ones. The things were cheap, of course, and to make others more realistic and artistic would be to produce a more expensive article. Nevertheless, he determined to make a few "just to see how they would go." He had made and sold hundreds of decoys and he had orders to make more. Why not make some good ones and charge accordingly? Possibly some of his customers might be willing to pay the higher price.

So, in filling one order from a wealthy customer, he let himself go. He made ducks with their heads turned backward, as ducks do turn their heads, when preening their feathers. He made geese with necks not stiff and straight, but gracefully curved, as a goose's neck is curved. He painted them with eyes which were more than round blobs of paint. He imitated their plumage and coloring, using a dead goose or duck as a model and painting with careful accuracy. And when he shipped that order to the wealthy customer, he explained what he had done, why he had done it, and why the amount of his bill was considerably greater than his former bills had been.

And the result was that, almost immediately, he received orders for more decoys of that kind from that customer and more and still more from that customer's

friends. His decoy-making business grew from a mere "side line" to a steady occupation, occupying all his working time. He gave up gunning, except as a sport for a rare holiday, and kept on cutting and carving and painting.

Then, one winter, when the decoy business had slackened a bit, he amused himself by making a few songbirds—birds of the neighboring woods and meadows—in wood, and coloring them as nature had colored the originals. These he mounted on sticks, thinking that they might, as he says, "look kind of pretty stuck up around in gardens and such places." And, when summer brought its trainloads of tourists, he sold every one of these and had orders ahead for dozens more.

And now—well, there is really no need to tell the rest. The Crowell birds are known and sold and shown with pride in homes as far away from Cape Cod as California or Texas. He sells them singly or in sets, the Shore Birds of New England in one set, the Land Birds of New England in another. His miniature geese and ducks and teal and plover and snipe are, except in size, of course, the exact copies, in shape, color and attitude, of the living originals. And so, too, are his robins and orioles and woodpeckers and kingfishers and sparrows and wild canaries and thrushes. He has even sold sets to museums.

Sometimes, by way of variety, he carves fishes. A trout leaping at a fly, a small-mouth black bass, a red perch, or a pickerel. I am the possessor of the first fish model he ever made. He had been with me on a day's outing at one

of the larger Cape ponds and the black bass were biting. I was fortunate enough to hook and land a three-and-a-half pound specimen, a good enough black bass for anybody in any water. I said I wished I could keep that fellow as a souvenir of a perfect day spent in perfect company.

"You can't keep him very well," said Elmer, "but I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll fix one for you that you *can* keep."

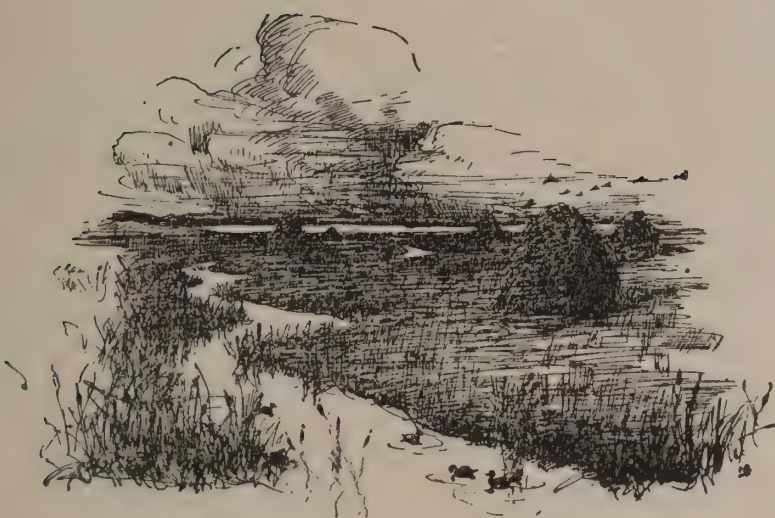
And he did. On the wall of the dining-room in our Cape Cod cottage there hangs a beautifully mounted black bass, his scales glistening, his mouth slightly open, his back fin bristling. And when our guests ask who stuffed and mounted that fish, I grin and take the model from the wall. It is made of wood, of course, and on the back of the board, in Elmer's handwriting is the inscription: "The first fish model I ever made." And, with it my name and his and the date of our fishing excursion.

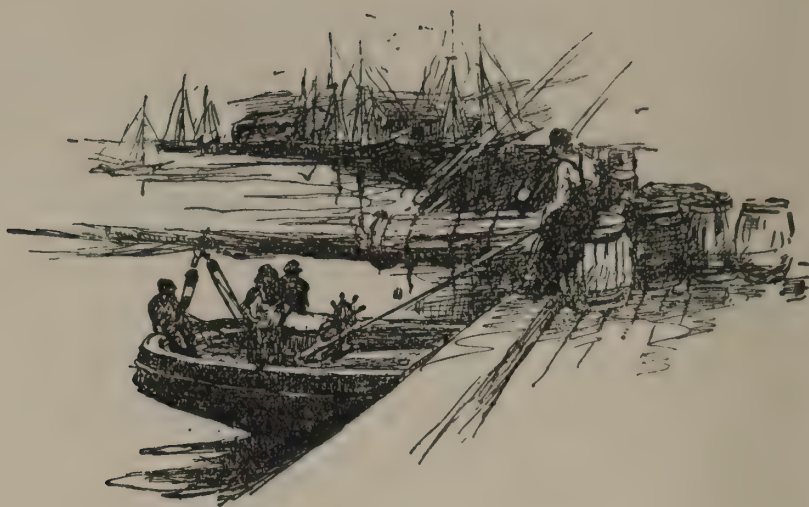
You may feel that we have strayed from our subject. One does not shoot bass with a gun and this is supposed to be a gunning chapter. Which is true, but I offer no apologies. One cannot write of gunning on Cape Cod without speaking of decoys and one should not speak of decoys — in Barnstable County, at any rate — without at least mentioning the man who made, and still makes, the finest decoys obtainable anywhere. And I wanted to talk about Elmer Crowell, anyhow.

As for fishing — well, I am always ready to talk about *that*.

And next summer, provided we are all here, Elmer

and the "Doctor" and I are going to that pond again, to fish and eat and smoke and loaf and spin yarns — going, as Elmer nowadays describes it, on another one of our "old men's parties."





Fish Weirs



ALONG the New Jersey coast they call them "traps" but throughout that section of Cape Cod with which the writer is acquainted they are always "weirs." In the season there are hundreds of them, big and little. Vineyard Sound and Nantucket Sound, with all their inlets and coves and bays, are edged with them, and Cape Cod Bay without its fringe of fish weirs would be strangely bare and unfamiliar.

In general plan they are all pretty much alike. The old-fashioned fly trap, which used to be placed on the kitchen tables before the days of window screens, was constructed on the same general principle. There was a small opening through which the fly was expected to enter but which

he was counted upon to overlook, when trying to escape. The eel trap and the lobster pot of today are so made. Of course, if the fish or the fly or the eel or the lobster were not stupid, if he had intelligence worth mentioning, he could get out easily enough and before it was too late; but, for the matter of that, if he had possessed a teaspoonful of intelligence, he would never have gone in.

It is comforting to realize that a human being is superior to this sort of idiocy. *He* never rushes blindly into something he knows nothing about. No, indeed! When *he* explores a new country, he blazes the trail as he travels it. When he enters the limestone cave, he strings clews behind him. When he buys shares in a "get-rich-quick" scheme, or borrows money from the bank in order to profit by margin trading on an "inside" stock-market tip, he — he — well, you see —

But why bring *that* up?

There are deep-water weirs and low-water weirs, but their construction and layout differ only slightly. The deep-water weir is most common. It has a long "leader", a high fence constructed of poles driven into the sand at equal distances apart, the spaces between the poles closed with nets hung on ropes. The upper edges of these ropes are buoyed with wooden floats and the lower edges are weighted with lead. The leader extends from the shallower water near shore out to the deep water of the channel.

A mackerel, swimming along about his business, which is presumably chasing a sand eel or a whitebait or some

other edible creature smaller than he is, suddenly finds his progress interfered with by the long row of nets. He cannot get through, so he turns to the right or left. If he goes to the left, he finds the water becoming more and more shallow. Shoal water, so his reason or instinct or experience — whatever it is that prompts a fish to do anything — has warned him that shoal water usually means trouble, so he turns once more and swims in the opposite direction. Got to get through or around this blessed thing somehow.

If he swims long enough, he reaches the outer end of the leader. Ah! Everything is all right now. Here is open water at last. But it isn't. Instead of one fence of nets there are now two. They are set a good way apart but the provoking things are there, behind as well as before him. He follows one set until he reaches a narrow opening. Here is the real exit, of course. He darts through. Yes, here we are. The fact that there are now so many other mackerel beside him proves it; only, why are they milling around in frantic circles? Why don't they go somewhere? There is plenty of water, deep water. Why —

And then he makes another terrifying discovery. He is not free at all. Not only are those nets on every side, but beneath. He dashes hither and thither, but to no avail. That narrow opening by which he entered — he has forgotten it altogether. Panic-stricken, he joins the rest of the school and swims in circles, getting nowhere. He is in the "pound", and the pound of a weir is, to a fish, the condemned cell. "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

And, the next morning, when the tide is high, men in boats come out from the beach and proceed to draw the net covering the bottom of the pound, draw it from the water, foot by foot and yard by yard, until this particular mackerel and his thousands of fellow prisoners are thrown together, — a flapping, silvery mass in a bulging pouch of netting. That pouch is lifted over the side of one of the boats and emptied inboard. That is, for our mackerel, the end of the story. What happens afterward does not interest him.

For the weir men, however, there is another installment. The net is put overboard and the pound made ready for another catch. The gasoline engine is started and the boat, with its glistening freight, chugs off on its five-mile trip to the harbor of the town. There, the mackerel are pitched up on the wharf, barreled and iced for shipment. If the city market is overloaded with that kind of fish at that particular time, and the price is too low to make immediate shipment profitable, they are often put into the "freezer", the big, brick cold-storage building. There the ammonia pipes freeze them into solid chips and there they stay until the mackerel-catching season is over and the price rises.

That is how a deep-water weir is operated on both sides of the Cape and, so far as I know, everywhere else alongshore. The weirs are taken up in the early fall; that is, the nets are removed, carried ashore, dried and stowed in the weir shanties. The poles, most of them, are lifted, boated ashore and piled. In early spring they will all be put out again, but to leave them in place during the

winter months would be a silly business. The winter gales and the tide-driven ice would wreck them utterly.

Every one — that is, anyone who knows about 'long-shore life at all — is familiar with deep-water weirs. Every skipper of a sailboat and every motorboat pilot has long ago learned to keep his weather eye peeled for those low fences sticking up out of the water. At night they are especially troublesome. When the tide is high and you might take a short cut home across the Common Flat or the Point Flat, or any other shoal between you and the harbor mouth, there are the weirs to consider. In the dark, or in a fog, unless you are as well acquainted with those waters and their trimmings as you are with the living-room and its furnishings at home, you had better go around the long way. No fun to run your boat's nose into a leader, or tangle a yard or two of net about your propeller shaft; to say nothing of being hung up there and obliged to stay while the tide ebbs and rises again. The long way is the safer way — yes, indeed.

But, after all, it is only the amateur boatman to whom the weirs are a possible menace to navigation. The regulars, the boat fishermen, or the "party boat" skippers, the latter being those tanned, weather-beaten fellows who, during the summer months, earn their living by taking landlubbers out bluefishing or mackereling or after plaice and cod — they do not let the weirs bother them. Day or night, fog or clear, they go their way. They know, not only the location of each weir, but who owns it; when it was put down, when it will be taken up; the current market price of the fish caught and sold, and



THE FISH WEIRS ON OLD BREWSTER SHORES AT TWILIGHT

whether or not the "weir folks" are making money this season.

To you, one of the landlubbers, the outer bay, on a late foggy afternoon, may seem like the end of the world, with the boat and its passengers the only people left alive. So far as you can see there is nothing behind or before or at the sides of your little craft — nothing except gray, damp emptiness. But the skipper, standing, smoking and unperturbed, apparently sees more than that. He turns the wheel a spoke or two.

"Where do you think we are, Cap'n?" you ask.

"Eh? Oh, just about abreast the life-savin' station. George Henry's weir's right ahead of us. I'm headin' off a little mite so's to clear the end of it."

You rise and peer ahead. You see nothing, of course; you did not expect to.

"Where did you say the weir was?"

"Right over yonder. There."

"I can't see it."

"Neither can I — yet. 'Twill show up in a minute."

Sure enough! There is a smudge in the dimness ahead, off the starboard bow. The gray blanket is a trifle soiled at that spot. Then, as the boat moves on, from the fog emerges a shadowy tracery of poles and ropes and nets, with a gull or two perched along the upper edge. A lonesome picture. There is nothing more dreary and lonely than a fish weir in a fog — nothing except a bell buoy. A fog-bound bell buoy is the most lonely thing in the world, I do believe. It not only looks God and man forsaken, but sounds that way.

The gulls rise, squawk raucously, and depart into the mist. You ask a question, not a very brilliant one.

"How did you know we were so close to that weir, Cap'n?"

"Eh? Know! Why, it's my job to know, ain't it?"

On one excursion, years ago, we had, as a fellow passenger, a young man from — from Nebraska, I think it was — to whom the sea and those who went down to and forth upon it were utter strangers. We had fished and the intention was to go ashore at the Point at noon and cook one of our fish for dinner. We had done our part but the fish had not done theirs; they simply would not bite. The skipper offered a suggestion. He had a string of gill-nets set in the outer bay and we might go over and haul them.

"May be a couple in them nets," he said. "Enough to make a meal, anyhow."

The young man from Nebraska looked doubtful.

"But, Captain," he inquired anxiously, "how are you going to find them? Do you know where your nets are?"

The skipper did not reply. He simply looked at his questioner and mentioned the name of a beneficent creator. As an expression of his feelings, it was sufficient.

That deep-sea friend of mine, the retired square-rigger mentioned in another chapter, had an experience of which he was accustomed to tell with feeling. After he retired from active seafaring he owned and sailed a twenty-foot, centerboard catboat. On one occasion he took an elderly clergyman and his wife out for a sail. Like the young man from Nebraska, this couple were

casual visitors to Cape Cod and a sea trip was a brand-new experience for each of them. The lady was especially nervous and apprehensive. When she first saw the little craft in which she was expected to fare forth upon the deep, she refused to set foot in it.

"Do you mean to say," waving her hand toward the expanse of the Atlantic, "that you are going to take us away out there in *that* tiny thing? William, I sha'n't go! And you sha'n't, either!"

After a period of expostulating and explaining and reassuring, she was, however, persuaded to take the risk. It was a pleasant day, with a light wind and a smooth sea, but the lady was far from happy. For the first half hour she sat motionless, clinging to the rail with both hands. Then she ventured to move about just a little. Her husband and the skipper were deep in conversation when they were interrupted by an agonized shriek from amidships.

They turned. She was pale and wide-eyed.

"Why, what is the matter, Luella?" demanded her husband.

"Oh, I told you, I told you!" she wailed. "I knew it wasn't safe. William, this boat is sinking. It's *sinking*, I tell you! It is half full of water already. I can see it! *Look!*"

She was pointing down the centerboard well!

Deep-water weirs are, as I have said, plentiful enough and alike almost everywhere; but the weirs along certain sections of the North Shore of the Cape are of the low-water variety, which is not, I believe, as common. It is

that tide again, that Cape Cod Bay tide, which makes them possible and workable. At high tide you see them dotting the distance, like the tops of fences just peeping from the water. At low tide the water has gone and there they are, like fences still, but now high and set in white sand. There is your difference. The deep-water weir man goes out in a boat to net his catch; the owner of a low-water weir rides out in a cart, pitches his fish into that cart and rides home again.

Perhaps there are just as many weirs along the outer bar opposite our town as there used to be, but to me it seems as if there were fewer. Then the distance between them was not more than a quarter of a mile at the most. An acquaintance of ours, who spent his summers in the village and loved it, wrote some verses in which he mentioned those weirs, as well as other local peculiarities. The verses were in parody of a popular song of the time and, although I have not asked his permission, I am sure he will not mind my quoting from them. As I remember they began like this:

I'd like to live in a lazy old town
Where the people work just to "accommodate."
Where the weirs obstruct the view
So the tide can scarce get through,
And the train's on time when it's an hour late.

Times have changed since then and, even if "train time" were the same, it would make little difference to the majority, for almost everyone, year-rounders as well as summer people, travels by motorcar. And if there are

not so many weirs as there once were, there are still a good many.

As a boy, I never refused an invitation to ride out to a fish weir with its owner. Sometimes we boys did not wait for an invitation, but went afoot—barefoot, of course; but we rode when we had the chance.

Always we rode in a blue truck-wagon, behind a plodding horse or a yoke of oxen. An ox team was an everyday sight along the Cape roads at that time, but I cannot remember seeing one within Barnstable County limits for years and years. Oxen were particularly fitted for hauling a load of fish over the wet flats and through the shallow channels. They were slow movers but they were strong and, after all, time was a minor consideration in a trip to and from a fish weir. You started out when the tide was ebbing and if, homeward bound, you forded the inshore channel before the water was up to the wheel hubs, that was all that was necessary.

On a summer afternoon, perched on the boxed seat of a smelly truck-wagon, with old Beriah Hallett beside you, his whiskered jaws moving as he chewed his tobacco, and the feet of the oxen “plop-plopping” or “splash-splashing” as they moved across the flats or waded the channels—that was good enough fun for a couple of bare-footed freckle-faced youngsters.

We reached the inshore end of the leader and followed it. The leader of a low-water weir was, in our day, not netted but lathed, the narrow strips set an inch or so apart. It was strongly constructed, too; we little chaps used to stick our bare toes between the slats and climb

to the top and roost there, like the gulls. When these weirs were taken down in the fall, the slatted sections were brought ashore and the poles left standing. At least, that, according to my recollection, was the usual procedure.

Beriah Hallett's weir was, like the rest, erected on the outer bar itself, the pound just at the farther edge where, even at the lowest tide, there were always two feet or more of water. Beriah would back the truck-wagon into the pound, climb out and, wading thigh deep amid the fish, select the marketable kinds from the "culch" and, with a dip-net, toss them into the cart. If he had a lucky day there would be mackerel there and tautog — "black fish" they call them elsewhere, I understand — and plaice and flounders and an occasional cod and haddock.

They were interesting, but we boys were quite as much interested in the despised "culch", the varieties that Mr. Hallett ignored and did not trouble himself to dip out. Sculpin and skate and blowfish — tickle a blowfish's "tummy" and he swells up like a balloon — and horsefoot crabs — king crabs, if you must be correct — and sea robins and squid — always plenty of squid.

Squid, in the deep-water weirs, and perhaps in the low-water ones now, are saved and sold to cod fishermen for bait, but Beriah did not save his. He chased them out of his way and swore at them, but that was all. We boys had a good time with them, however. Strike the water before a school of them, or throw a stone among them, and they would vanish in a smoke screen of their own creating. "Squid ink" we used to call the black liquid

they squirted when alarmed. It was good for something — we juveniles were sure of that — but there was some difference of opinion among us as to what that something was. Good for rheumatism or to write letters with, or — or — well, it does not matter now. It did not matter then, for, so far as I ever heard, no boy ever collected any for experimental purposes.

The ride home was not so much fun as the ride out, for we were wet through by that time, and chilly and hungry. Incidentally, it was edging on to the supper hour and we had all been warned what might happen if we were late for supper again. But, no matter what did or did not happen, the next time Mr. Hallett invited any of us to go “weiring” with him, we went.

Weir owning and operating is, like any other kind of fishing, an uneven business. There are good days and bad, good seasons and bad, plenty of fish or almost none at all. And, of course, it does not necessarily follow that a plentitude of fish means a substantial profit. If your weir is filled, so, probably, is your neighbor’s and his neighbor’s, and so on all alongshore. And that means low prices in the city markets. Here is where the cold-storage plants — the “fish freezers” — help a bit nowadays. There were, however, no freezers fifty years ago and when a weir owner made a lucky strike, or a succession of them, it was a time for celebration.

In a town not so many miles from ours lived a man who owned several weirs and one summer luck came his way. I have forgotten what sort of fish they were, but at any rate he and his employees went out one day to find his

weirs bulging. The market price was unusually high and the check he received was for a substantial sum. Things like this did not happen every day, or every year, and when they did something should be done to commemorate the occasion. He was a rough, eccentric old chap but generous, and he decided to give a party, a "regular" party. He invited his fellow fishermen to come to his house on an appointed evening.

To his mind a party without drinkables would not be a party at all and, as he intended his to be talked about and remembered long after it was over, the liquids provided must be of a sort to fit the occasion. What did the millionaires — the "big bugs" serve to their guests? Why, champagne, of course. He had read of champagne often enough, although he had never tasted any. Well, he would taste it now and so should his friends. He ordered two cases of champagne.

When the friends gathered at his house, they found one of the family washtubs occupying the center of the parlor floor. In the tub were two good-sized blocks of ice. Then the twenty-four quarts of champagne were brought in with a flourish, were uncorked and their contents emptied into the tub. Each guest was handed a tea cup and commanded to "dip in."

As a novelty, the party was a grand success, but in another way a trifle disappointing. The leather-necked mackerel seiner, who told us the story long afterwards, probably expressed the feeling of the majority when he said:

"I'd just as soon drink cider as I would that sour stuff.

And I don't mean hard cider, neither; you can most generally git somewheres with hard cider. But that champagne slop — why, 'twas tame. It didn't have no *authority* to it."

The leather-necked seiner who spun this yarn swore it was true. Perhaps it is. At any rate, the idea of serving champagne from a washtub did not strike him as odd. The fact that the stuff should be served anywhere was the odd part of it.

There were several deep-water weirs in the bay opposite our town. They were, of course, set farther out than the low-water weirs and, as I remember, were owned, not by individuals, but by several persons in partnership. Occasionally a horse mackerel or a sturgeon got into the pound of one of those weirs and then there was a scrimmage. The amount of damage a six-foot sturgeon or a five-hundred-pound horse mackerel can do to a weir is considerably more than a little.

To get him into a boat alive is out of the question. He must be clubbed and hacked to death, and that is a long and dangerous job when you are fenced in by a wall of netting which you are anxious to keep from being torn to rags. And then, when at last he is killed and rolled inboard, he is good for nothing. Bring him ashore, throw him out on the beach and let him rot in the sun — that is, or was, the procedure. One of our most fragrant recollections is that of a dead horse mackerel and a sturgeon or two lying on the shore to windward of the weir shanties at Quivet Neck.

But that was as it used to be. That was when a horse

mackerel was just a horse mackerel and no one would have dreamed of eating him, any more than they would have dreamed of eating a horse. It is very different now. He is not a horse mackerel any more; he is a tuna. One of the great shocks of my life came with the discovery that the "leaping tuna", the great game fish that sportsmen travel away out to the Pacific Coast to catch on a hook, that fishing clubs are named for, that is served in restaurants and canned for home consumption — that he is, after all, nothing but the horse mackerel we used to hear sworn at and see thrown away to rot — ah, that was a shock!

I am not very fond of tuna — even a boarding-house tuna-fish salad does not stir my appetite. No, the memory of that beach and its aroma comes between me and the salad plate.

But that, of course, is just a prejudice and prejudices formed in boyhood are hard to get rid of. One day, at the fish wharf, I watched a weir boat unload. Different kinds of fish went into different barrels — cod in one, plaice in another, etc. There was, however, one barrel into which almost anything seemed to go. A fair-sized skate was pitched into it. Now the idea of a skate being worth saving was, to my Cape Cod mind, beyond comprehension. I asked about it. The man with the pitchfork shook his head.

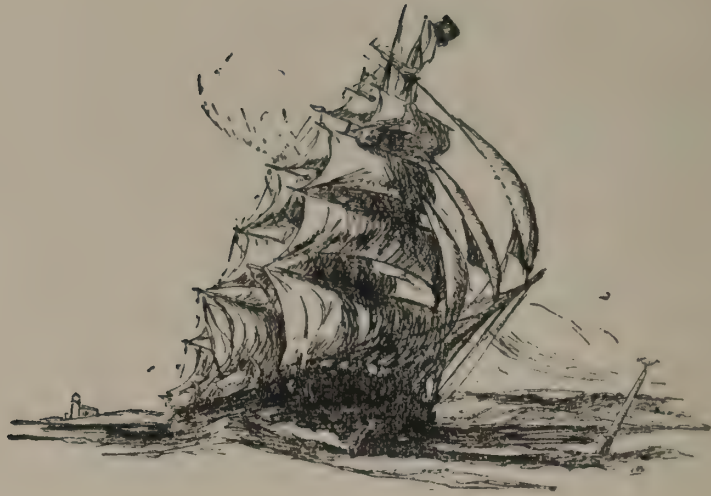
"Huh!" he grunted. "That's one of the New York barrels. They eat anything over there."

Well, a skate is a ray and, in France — or, no doubt, to a French cook anywhere — the ray is a delicacy. If we

Cape Codders met him during the course of a banquet at a New York hotel, we probably should have no fault to find with him. Unless he were labelled "skate." Then we would scornfully pass him by.

We do not care to eat skates, or to catch them, either.





Rare Old Sandwich



No ONE now thinks of Cape Cod as a business center, or even as a suburb of business. We — the majority of us — think of it as a pleasant play-time land. We think of it in connection with boats and bathing and golf and motoring, of picnics and clambakes and good times generally. To visit it means, to many of us, a coming back home again. To many more it is a place to leave with regret in the autumn, to think about all winter, and to return to as soon as the children are out of school and it is time to open the cottage or occupy the rooms at the hotel.

But we do not think of it in connection with business — that is, business other than that done by the attractive

little summer shops in the villages or the larger stores in Hyannis.

Of course, when we really consider the matter, we realize that the cultivation and marketing of the Cape Cod cranberry is still a business and no small business, either. And the shell-fish — oysters and clams and scallops — are shipped to our large cities. And the mackerel boats from Provincetown and the weirs along our coast catch and distribute quantities of fish. But they — well, somehow they belong to Cape Cod. They are what we would expect to find there. What we do not expect to find there, and what we do not find nowadays, is the other sort of business, the manufacture on a fairly large scale of products not connected with the sea at all.

In the days of our great-grandparents — yes, and the early days of our grandparents — the making of salt on the Cape was a very real and profitable business. The old saltworks, with their windmills to pump the water, and the wooden “pans” into which to pump it, and the oddly shaped movable roofs to cover the pans in rainy weather, were scattered all along our shores. Making salt by the evaporation of sea water was a profitable occupation and helped to fatten Great-grandfather’s pocketbook.

But salt from the mines and that brought from Turk’s Island and elsewhere in sailing vessels eventually put the Cape saltworks out of existence. The old buildings were still standing in my boyhood. We played among them and climbed the slanting, four-cornered, pointed roofs. But the buildings were falling to pieces even then and people were carting away the beams and planks to use in the

making of barns and sheds. "Saltworks lumber" was considered to be especially good for such purposes — it was well seasoned and cost little or nothing.

But the saltworks, buildings and all, are gone now and, after all, they were connected with the sea, literally and figuratively. In Dennis and in Chatham and in other towns along the Cape there was some shipbuilding a hundred years ago; but that, too, depended upon the sea and the life upon the sea for its profit and prosperity. And, in the '50's and '60's and '70's, and before that period, the fishing industry was a big money-maker for Cape Cod men. There were wharves and warehouses all along the South Shore of the Cape and at Wellfleet and Provincetown. Chatham and Harwich and Dennis and Hyanis and Provincetown and Falmouth and Wellfleet sent their fleets to the Banks and to the mackerel grounds — fleets of good-sized schooners, skippered and manned by Cape Codders — and fortunes were made by the owners of and shareholders in those vessels.

At Monomoy Point, in the '50's, one firm had large buildings and wharves and their fleet numbered many vessels. The old buildings are there yet, empty and weather-beaten and forlorn, but the wharves have disappeared and the harbor has sanded in, and the business, like its owners, is dead and buried. Along the Chatham main street, however, the homes which those owners built still remain, porticoed and cupolaed and of goodly size. They were the town's show mansions in their day.

But fishing — well, fishing *is* the sea.

There was, however, on Cape Cod one business to

which the sea had no relation, or very little. It merely, away back in the beginning of things, pushed and washed up from its bed the clean, flinty sand, the abundance of which was the primary cause of the factory's locating on that site and, in the days before the railway, the product was, much of it, sent away in sailing craft; but the product itself was glass, — glassware of all kinds and descriptions.

As a youngster, the name of the Sandwich glass factory was to me a name and little more than that. Occasionally some young fellow from our town disappeared from the crowd at the postoffice at mailtime and we were told that he had gone to work at the glassworks. But that, too, was of but minor interest. The glass factory was, even then, in its last stages and, although people spoke of it, it was not considered as important as it had been.

I do remember seeing, from the windows of the train, the tall chimneys rising above the elms and being told that the smoke from those chimneys came from the place where they made glassware like our "cheese plate" at home, and the "lion-topped" pickle jar, and the big glass marble with the figure of a lamb inside it, and the cup plates and the "overlay" lamp on the sitting-room table. This information was interesting, but not engrossingly so. The cup plates and the pickle jar and the lamp were commonplaces, "everydays"; we saw them all the time, lived with them, and a trip to Boston was by no means an "everyday."

I never visited that glass factory and now I am sorry — very sorry.

The buttery shelves of every house in our town were filled with Sandwich glass at that period. And each sitting-room and parlor table displayed its overlay lamp, or its blue or ruby or green lamp. There were at least half a dozen "vaseline yellow" candlesticks pushed back out of the way in our closet, discarded, of course, when kerosene came to be burned for lighting purposes. What became of them? Who knows? Thrown away, broken, pitched out with the rest of the rubbish. A few were left, to be unearthed in the garret forty years later and hailed with cheers, like the discovery of nuggets in a miner's pan.

Oh, dear — well! Whoever expected those old things would ever come to be treasures — treasures of great price? We did not, certainly. If we had —

Yes, madam, I know you have been dying to ask a question. You wish to be informed whether the cake plate which you have just brought home in triumph, the one with the characteristic edge and the beautiful "lacy" decoration, is "genuine Sandwich" or not. Was it made in the old factory in Sandwich town — or wasn't it?

Madam, I do not know. Very likely it was.

And very likely it was not.

Certainly, certainly, I understand. You bought it from an antique dealer in a Cape Cod town, and if you can't find genuine Sandwich glass on Cape Cod, where can you find it? And the neatly written placard beside it in the dealer's showcase — the case where he always keeps his very choicest things — was inscribed "Rare Old Sandwich." And goodness knows you paid enough for it!

Yes, I will agree with all that. One ought to find genuine Sandwich glass in the county where it was made. And a great deal was made there. And a great deal was sold and used there. And I have no doubt whatever that the price you paid for this particular piece was high—very high. Oh, now, wait a minute! Not too high, perhaps, considering what you got in return for the money, but—well, high. And the cake plate is a charming thing. We are in complete agreement so far, aren't we?

But when you ask for a positive answer to your question: "Is my new old cake plate really a bit of 'rare old Sandwich'?" then I must refuse to give that answer. I might equivocate, but to equivocate, so the dictionary tells us, is to "evade, dodge, shuffle, shift, etc.", and what would be gained by that? Certainly I hope your plate is Sandwich, and it may be, but—I do not know whether it is or not. Which was what I said in the beginning.

And that confession does not imply cowardice or lamentable ignorance on the writer's part. In all probability he knows as much about the origin of that cake plate as the next fellow, and that means, among others, the dealer who sold it to you. The dealer may have been, and perhaps is, perfectly honest in the matter. The person from whom he bought it told him it was a Sandwich bit, just as the person from whom that person received it told *him* the same thing. And it might have been in that second person's family, on his or her closet shelf, since 1850 or thereabouts. And it is a Sandwich pattern, too; the Sandwich factory made glass cake plates just like this

one. And still there would be no positive proof that your plate was made there.

To quote from one authority, from Rhea Mansfield Knittle's extremely interesting book on "Early American Glass":

Meeting a well-informed woman whose home has always been in Sandwich, I told her that one of my friends hoped I would correctly list and catalogue the output of the Sandwich factory. We both laughed. There was a day when she contemplated listing, describing, and photographing the cup-plate patterns made in her home town. After she had passed the three hundred mark (listing, not photographing), she felt the field was so beyond the capacity of one booklet that she stopped.

The great handicap in listing patterns made at Sandwich lies in the fact that *they were also made at other contemporary flint-glass houses*. With few exceptions, we do not know what manners, forms and designs of glass were made *exclusively* by Jarves and Fessenden, or which *originated* on the Cape. I have seen a disclaimer for nearly every claim of all-inclusiveness.

The italics are the author's, not ours.

And, further on in the same book, we find these two statements. The first is by Walter A. Dyer:

"It is impossible to distinguish a piece of Sandwich glassware from other pressed glass except by knowing something of the history and source of the piece in question. . . . Exquisiteness of design is seldom, in so far as may be ascertained, a characteristic of Sandwich glass."

And from Charles M. Stow:

"Unfortunately the absence of marks on the Sandwich factory's product has brought about a condition as to attribu-

tion where one collector's guess is as good as another's. It is undoubtedly true that much of the glass sold as Sandwich was made in the New England Glass Company's factory at East Cambridge, much of it comes from Ireland and England, some of it was made in Pittsburgh, and some of it in factories still farther west, in Ohio and Kentucky."

So — you see? But, please, madam, do not, after having read these discouraging statements, carry that cake plate back to your dealer and denounce him as a fraud and a cheat. In nine cases out of ten, he is as honest as you are. If Miss Georgianna Dash, who gave or sold that plate to the person who sold it to him, knew positively that it had belonged to her grandfather, who lived in West Barnstable — which is not so far from Sandwich — and if it is, *as* it is, a pattern which the Sandwich factory made — why, then, keep it and exhibit it to your friends and be happy.

At any rate, it is old and it is quaint — there is an over-worked word, that "quaint" — and it is pretty. And, to a too sensitive conscience that statement of Mr. Stow's is very comforting: "One collector's guess is as good as another's." All right; you guess it to be rare old Sandwich. It is just as likely to be that as to be rare old anything else; considering the little you know of its history, probably more so.

All this has been written with feeling. We have in our possession a number of pieces of "rare old Sandwich", a very few of which we have inherited, but the majority of which we bought, as you did the cake plate. This writer is not, because of several reasons, mainly financial,

a "collector", but he and his family have for years been picking up a bit here and there. We have a "Benjamin Harrison" dish and a "beehive" plate and two "eight-mold" side dishes—we are especially proud of those eight-mold dishes; they are rare as well as beautiful—and dozens of saucedishes and cup plates and things like that. All are of the "lacy" pattern and all, we think, charming to look at and own—particularly to own. And to us they are all Sandwich and we exhibit them as such.

"'And,' the Dormouse went on, 'they drew all manner of things—everything that begins with an M—'

"'Why with an M?' said Alice.

"'Why not?' said the March Hare.

"Alice was silent."

That is what we expect our callers to be when we display our treasures. "Why are they Sandwich?"—"Why not?" After that, silence on the caller's part, if you please.

And, while we are on this phase of the subject, and just to prove that one guess is as good as another's, no matter who the guesser may be, let me say a few words about another make of old glass—Stiegel. Every once in a while, as you wander about the country—always provided you are a victim of the antique habit which, as someone has said, is as demoralizing as the drink habit and very much more expensive—you notice in an antique shop a saltcellar or eggcup or pitcher labelled "Stiegel." Time was when the writer took those labels at their face value, even if he seldom could afford to take the articles

to which they were attached. But, nowadays, he merely smiles in a superior fashion. He is skeptical.

Fifteen years ago, or about that time, I was fortunate enough to find, on a shelf in the buttery of an old Cape house, a decanter, or cruet, which interested me very much. It was old, very old. The lower end of its glass stopper was not cut or ground away, but broken off, as old stoppers were often broken by early American glass makers. On its bulging sides were crudely etched baskets with flowers, such as you see in photographs of authenticated pieces of Stiegel glassware. Altogether, it looked to me like a find—a real find. I yearned for that decanter—and I bought it; paid a liberal price for it too.

A year or so afterward I happened to be in conversation with one of the leading dealers in American antiques, an authority whose name and integrity were famous among collectors. I mentioned my decanter and described it to him. He was very much interested and asked me, as a favor, to bring it in to his New York shop the next time I was in the city. I had no thought of selling it, but was only too glad to show it.

So I did bring it in. He examined it, held it to the light, even got a magnifying glass and examined it through that. Then he sighed—and there was covetousness in his sigh.

“If that isn’t a fine piece of genuine Stiegel, than I never saw one,” he declared.

“But are you sure it is Stiegel?”

“Sure! . . . Well, of course, you can seldom be really

sure of anything in this business, but I tell you how we can settle it. If you will permit me to do so, I will send it to the head of the American Glass Department of the Museum here in New York. He is a friend of mine and he certainly knows as much about old glass as anyone in this country can know. He will tell us whether it is Stiegel or not."

So my decanter was sent to the Museum expert and in his hands it remained for a month. Then it came back with a note attached. And what do you suppose the expert authority had written in that note?

Why, that he and his fellow experts could not tell whether it was or was not made in the Stiegel factory. It looked as much like Stiegel glass as anything could look, and it might have been made by him. But, on the other hand, it might just as well have been made abroad. Many of Stiegel's workmen came from Germany and many of his wares were copies of patterns they brought with them. It was a piece of very old glass, that was all they — the museum experts — were willing to swear to.

Now do you wonder I smile that superior smile when I read the cocksure labels in the dealers' showcases? Do you wonder that I turn on my heel and walk away? I hope you do not wonder any such thing, because, as a general rule, I do not walk away. Instead I stay and ask questions and bargain — and, sometimes, buy. That is the kind of weak-willed individual *I* am.

A costly, even extravagant, weakness — oh, yes! And yet, every once in a while, I discover that one of my extravagances has not been extravagant at all; that I

have made a genuine and highly profitable bargain. For example:

We were motoring by an antique shop then located on the way from our town to Boston and we stopped, as we usually did, to see what the dealer had picked up since our last visit. There was a "Sandwich" compote there, a beautiful, lacy, unchipped and unnicked compote. It was of a pattern we had never seen before, although a variation of a pattern which the Sandwich factory used to make in its best days. The price was twenty dollars—far, far more than we should spend for a bit of old glass to put on a shelf and look at occasionally. We did not need it and we could not afford it—so we bought it.

And, some ten years later, we stopped at another antique shop—in New Hampshire, this time—and, after the usual long preliminary conversation with its proprietor, after we had wandered with him from cupboard to cupboard, and from table to table, he began to understand that we really did love old glass. And it was then, of course, that he opened locked drawers and reached to the upper shelves of closets, to produce and expatiate upon the gems of his collection. "I don't show these to everybody," he observed. "It isn't worth while."

The implication that it was worth while to show them to us was flattering. We rose to the bait, as he expected us to do, and "Oh'd" and "Ah'd" our appreciation of each gem. At last, from the back of the lower drawer in an old secretary, he brought forth something wrapped in tissue paper.

"This," he crowed proudly, "now this is—but I won't say another word. Just look at it, that's all!"

He carefully removed the paper. We looked—and saw the exact replica of the compote which we had bought ten years before, exact except in color. Whereas ours was white glass, this was a beautiful blue. We said "Marvelous!" and "Wonderful!" and, as a climax, "Where on earth did you get it?"

He told us where he got it, from an old lady in a little village ten or a dozen miles away. It had been her mother's before her.

"She had it stowed away with a lot of other stuff up attic. Never used it, never cared anything about it. But isn't it a wonder?"

We agreed that it was and asked the price for which he would be willing to sell it.

He shook his head. "I'm not going to sell it for a while," he said. "Going to keep it and—well, worship it a little longer. . . . Oh, yes, I'll probably sell it some time, when I happen to be hard up, but the one that buys it will have to pay my price. I sha'n't let it go for *less* than three hundred and fifty dollars. Until I can get at least that, I'll hang on to it."

He may be hanging on to it yet, so far as I know. There were at least three hundred and twenty-five reasons why we did not offer to buy it. But we strutted out of that antique shop with our chests expanded. Of course, the rare color of his Sandwich compote made it more precious than ours but in every other respect the two were identical. And if his was worth three hundred and fifty

dollars, ours was worth — well, a good many times the twenty we had paid for it. Who said we did not know a bargain when we saw one? Who said buying old glass was throwing away money? Throwing it away! Why, we never made so good an investment before and probably would never make so good a one again. And so on — and on.

Of course, at least half of this enthusiasm was superfluous. That blue compote would almost surely never sell for three hundred and fifty dollars. A cash offer of one hundred and fifty would probably have resulted in its changing owners. The dealer might have wiped his streaming eyes with one hand, but he would have snatched the hundred and fifty with the other. Nevertheless, we are very glad we bought our compote — and a little proud of our judgment.

But were either of those compotes made at the Sandwich glassworks? Nobody knows. Perhaps — and again perhaps not. They are rare and beautiful, and they are early American glass.

I could go on in this way for pages and pages and enjoy doing it, too, but one must restrain oneself. We are supposed to be chatting about Cape Cod yesterdays, not of Cape Cod collecting today. I shall say almost nothing of the history of the old glassworks at Sandwich. It is a tempting and, to me personally, an extremely interesting subject, but it has been treated in at least a dozen books. These are “remember” talks.

As I have already said, I never visited the glassworks and now I am sorry.

And yet, if I had done so, it would have been in the later years of the factory's existence, and that, it seems to me, would have been not nearly as interesting as a visit in the earlier years — in the '30's and '40's and '50's. That was the period when the best of the "rare old Sandwich" was turned out and I wish I might have witnessed the process.

Those overlay lamps — I wish I might have seen their manufacture. Oh, yes, lamps of their kind were also made in other American factories and in Bristol, England, but we Cape Codders like to think that the old Sandwich lamp was a little better than the other makers' products. They were so beautifully colored and so graceful; there was — and is — a tang of real craftsmanship about them. You feel that a lamp like that could not have been turned out in batches of hundreds at a time. The skilled workman who made it took pride in his job and enjoyed it, too. Of course the Bristol lamps were handsome and are often sold as "genuine Sandwich" today, but put a genuine "genuine" beside one of them and see the difference. What? You can't see it? Well, perhaps we cannot either, but we are going to believe that we can.

And the dolphin candlesticks! The sea-green variety and the Sandwich blue or the Sandwich "vaseline yellow." Or those with the blue bases, with little flecks of white in them, and milky tops. And — and — oh, you know what I mean. This Czecho-Slovakian stuff — the market is flooded with Slovakian "dolphins" in recent years but do they compare with the old Sandwich "dolphin"? About



THE GENERAL STORE

as a sculpin compares with a bluefish. Both fish, but that is the only resemblance. And the price does not compare, either.

That "cheese plate" before mentioned had been bought by Grandmother for ten or fifteen cents. We wandered into a dealer's establishment in New York recently and saw a pair of those plates on the show table. The lady who presided over the shop condescendingly informed us that they were great rarities and could be purchased for fourteen dollars each. We might have told her that they were not at all rare and could be bought on the Cape, even now, for from two to five dollars. We say we might have told her that, but we did not. She was such a formidable lady and carried her nose at such an elevation that we told her nothing. We walked out. But, when we turned the corner and were out of sight, we lifted *our* noses. Fourteen dollars for one of those cheese plates! Robber!

One has to confess it; there is a certain taint of chicanery about all this collecting game. The buyer, if he is a dealer, usually pretends that he is not very much interested in the item he had set his heart upon. It is this other thing, the one he really cares nothing for, which he pretends to be eager to get. He might buy this second article—the battered table, or whatever it may be—if he could get it cheap enough. There is always a certain demand for tables like that. "Care to make a price on it, Mrs. Simpson? Make it low, that's all." Mrs. Simpson makes a price. The dealer whistles. "Ten dollars! Oh, now, come, be reasonable. . . . Oh, all right, all right. Tell you what

I'll do: Throw in that old lamp and those saucedishes with it and we'll call it a trade. Or, if you say so, I'll give you eight for the table itself; that will suit me just as well."

And Mrs. Simpson, eager for the extra two dollars, does throw in the lamp and the saucedishes, which have been in the lumber room "up attic" for years and years, and that dealer puts them aboard his wagon and drives away. And when he gets back to his shop, the table is deposited in *his* lumber room—to be sold, perhaps, at a small profit later on; but the lamp, which was the one thing he had had his eye on all the time, is dusted and polished and placed on the table in the front shop. And when Mr. and Mrs. Chicago come into that shop, that lamp is sold to them for seventy-five dollars and everyone is satisfied.

"Everyone?" you say. "How about poor Mrs. Simpson? All she got for the table, saucedishes and lamp was a paltry ten-dollar bill. Not much satisfaction for her. She has been cheated."

But wait a minute. You do not hear the conversation between Mrs. Simpson and her husband when he comes home that evening. She tells him of the transaction.

"Just think of it, John! That old broken-down table that you wanted to chop up for kindlin' last winter! My mother bought that table for three dollars over sixty years ago and 'twas secondhand then. And that old kerosene lamp, with no shade and no chimney, and those four saucedishes that I had a mind to throw on

the rubbish pile last time I cleaned the pantry! I got ten dollars for the lot. Think of that! Ten whole dollars! Now, with what I made from selling my preserves and jelly, we can buy one of those radio machines and have a good time evenin's all winter."

John thinks it over. "Fellow that bought the junk must have been crazy," he declares. "I don't know's you'd ought to have taken advantage of him, Sarah. Don't seem so 's 'twas right, hardly."

"Huh! His bein' crazy wasn't my fault, was it? If I hadn't got his money, somebody else would, you can be certain sure. But is your wife a smart woman or ain't she? Answer me that, John Simpson."

So, you see, everyone *is* satisfied, including Mrs. Chicago, who will show that lamp to curious friends, tell precisely how and where she found it, and how, after the dealer had asked her ninety dollars for it, she had made him take seventy-five. "Of course, I pretended I wasn't really interested in it at all and that's why he came down in the price. That's the only way to handle those people, my dear. Don't ever let them see that you are eager to buy the piece you want."

This is the way it used to be, not so many years ago. It is not quite the same now. There are so many antique dealers and so many antique buyers that the Mrs. Simpsons are beginning to get exaggerated ideas concerning the worth of the contents of their sheds and lumber rooms. And they are not always discriminating; often, in their minds, the mere fact that a thing is old is sufficient to make it presumably valuable. Last summer we saw

displayed in a Cape Cod yard an article with a large placard tacked upon it. The placard read:

“GENUINE ANTIQUE.
FOR SALE AT A REASONABLE PRICE.”

The “genuine antique” was a dilapidated hog trough!

They made all sorts of glassware at the Sandwich glass factory during the sixty-odd years of its business activity. The first glass was blown there in 1825 and the company dissolved automatically in 1894. Strikes and labor troubles really put it out of business, although there was an abortive and unsuccessful attempt to revive it later on. The buildings burned to the ground eventually.

But during those sixty-two years, it is estimated that the Sandwich output was of the value of thirty million dollars. “The New England States and New York State,” so the Knittle book tells us, “were the chief consumers, but the wares went to almost every foreign port open to trade with America for over half a century.”

And the diversity of that output! The same authority states that at least four hundred different shapes and designs of lamps were made there. Over three hundred varieties of salt-cups and two hundred varieties of candlesticks. And lampshades and sugar bowls and dishes and plates and balls and marbles and bottles and flasks and compotes and saucers—every form of glassware and every color. Cut glass and etched glass and copies of Bohemian glass.

With all this, it would seem that one might be fairly secure in assuming that a good specimen picked up on

the Cape was "genuine Sandwich." But before being too sure let us reread those quotations.

" . . . undoubtedly true that much of the glass sold as Sandwich was made at . . . East Cambridge . . . Ireland . . . England . . . Pittsburgh . . . Ohio and Kentucky."

Well . . . and then what? Why, apparently nothing, but faith and hope, spiced with as much history and probability as can be obtained — if any.

A friend of ours tells of a friend of his, a shrewd Caper, whose cousin by marriage, living in a town near the lower end of the county, was sure that he possessed a bed which was a genuine antique and, therefore, valuable. The Caper, telling the story to my friend, said:

"I was down there to his" — the cousin's — "house for a couple of days and nights a spell ago and I had to sleep in that darned bed. I give you my word I thought mornin' never would come. That was the very worst bed ever I laid down on. Next day he" — the cousin by marriage, of course — "says to me, he says, 'What do you think of that old bed of mine? Some bed, ain't it?'"

"'Um-hm,' I told him. "'Some' is right."

"'That bed is worth money,' says he; 'I'll sell that for a lot some day. That bed is old — genuine old!'"

"'How do you know it's old?' I asked him. 'Can you prove it?'"

"'Prove it! I'll say I can! Why, my own grandfather *died* in that bed. What do you say to that?'"

The story-teller paused here and my friend asked a question.

"Well, what did you say?" he inquired.

"Eh? Oh, I said about the only thing seemed to me there was to say. I told him I wasn't surprised."

And, madam, whichever way the cat jumps, if you discover proof that your cake plate is "genuine Sandwich" or that it is not — if you tell me of your triumph or your disillusionment — I shall make the same answer.

I shall tell you that I am not surprised.

But, oh, I do wish I could have known in the old days even the little I now know about Sandwich glass.





Heave and Haul



HERE are two good Cape Cod words for you. Brought ashore from the deep sea, of course. The fo'mast hands on the old "wind-jammers" heaved — or "hove" — the anchor or the lead and hauled the sheet or the bowline.

Haul on the bowline,
The *Polly* is a-rollin'.
Haul on the bowline,
The bowline HAUL.

So the old chantey goes. Surely it is not necessary to tell you that "bowline" is pronounced "bo-lin." I should

not mention it if I had not heard a landlubber — and he was a college professor, at that — pronounce it “bow line”, “bow”, like the bough of a tree, and “line” like something to catch fish with. It may have been a bow line in the beginning, but it has been a bo-lin since Noah hove short on the Ark’s cable — shortly after that, anyhow. If it were not “bo-lin” how could it rhyme with “rollin’?” I ask you.

But down on the Cape, we heave and haul on land, as well as on water. Our small boys “heave” a baseball or a stone. Our horses “haul” a buggy or truck-wagon, or did in the days when there were truck-wagons and buggies. A summer neighbor noticed that a neighbor of his — a retired mackerel seiner — was at work with hammer and saw on the roof of his dwelling. Naturally, being a neighbor, our friend stopped to ask questions. The old mackerelman explained.

“Goin’ to put in one of them dormer windows,” he said. “Cal’latin’ to see if I can’t heave a little sunshine into the front upstairs bedroom.”

And when we asked a Cape acquaintance as to the professional ability of a dentist who had recently begun practice in the community, the answer was informative and characteristic.

“They say he’s first-rate at his job. Fixes your teeth up fine and don’t charge all outdoors for it. But,” by way of warning, “you understand he don’t do no haulin’.”

Meaning that the dentist did not extract teeth.

Yes, we heave and haul almost everything on Cape Cod, but when, early in August, we notice men walking along

the edge of the surf at Monomoy Point or on the beach below the lighthouse, men who whirl their right hands in circles above their heads, we know that they are both heaving *and* hauling. We know that the bluefish have "struck on."

For, down our way, in August and September and early October, to "heave and haul" means to cast for bluefish from the beach with a hand line and it does not mean anything else.

The sportsman from the city, with his expensive outfit, may cast with a surf rod and reel, but the native Cape Codder almost always "heaves and hauls." His father did it before him and so did his grandfather and great-grandfather. "You catch fish when you heave 'n' haul. And when you catch 'em, you 'most generally get 'em. Runnin' up and down the beach, grindin' at a crank and prayin' to the Lord that the one you've hooked don't get off again, may be all right, but what for?"

Now to heave and haul as it should be done is no easy trick to learn. Watch the young man who boards at the Sea Gull Inn and who is down at the Cape on his two weeks' vacation. He is dressed — or undressed — for the part. Bareheaded, barelegged, coatless, his shirt sleeves rolled above the elbows. He has been up to "Bailey's" or the "Outfit Shop" in the village and has bought a line and a "drail" and he looks the complete fisherman.

"Torbay had incurred a great deal of expense
To make him a Scotchman in every sense,
But this is a matter, you'll readily own,
That isn't a question of tailors alone."

And there is more to heaving and hauling than garb and tackle. Watch him as he makes his first "heave." He whirls the heavy lead lure above his head and throws it out into the creaming surf. It does not go so very far; his whirl was all right enough but he did not let go at the proper time. And the slack of the line tangles about his feet. When he "hauls" — when he pulls the "drail" back to shore again — his pull is jerky and uneven, fast for two or three hitches and slow for the following two or three.

Now watch his nearest neighbor on that same beach. Watch Jerry Rogers, lobsterman, quahaug-raker, weir-maker, eel-spearer, veteran handy man alongshore. Here is an old master. Jerry, too, is coatless, but he generally is in the summer months, except on Sundays and the Fourth of July. His ancient flannel shirt is open at the neck, a faded cap hangs over one ear, he wears a pair of fisherman's rubber boots, their tops turned down at the knees. His lined face and his arms are tanned to the color of that mahogany table you have in the living-room at home, the one that belonged to Great-aunt Hettie and that you and the family are so proud of. His thin jaws work methodically over his tobacco and his blue eyes have the sailor's squint.

He has not tied the end of the line around his waist, as the young fellow from the Sea Gull Inn has done. It is perfectly proper to make it fast in that way and many do, but Mr. Rogers has tied his to a stake and thrust that stake down in the sand. He picks up the other end, the end attached to the drail, and whirls it easily and grace-



HEAVING AND HAULING ON OLD MONOMOY

fully. At just the right instant he lets it go and it sails through the air, out and out, until it drops in deep water beyond the second ridge of breakers. The heave was so perfect that the line is straightened to the last inch. Jerry leisurely picks it up and "hauls" it in, hand over hand, walking slowly up the beach as he does so. Nothing jerky or spasmodic about that haul. When the lure splashes through the ripples, that line lies extended on the sand, no kinks or tangles, ready for the next heave.

If you were a self-respecting and discriminating bluefish, which drail would you snap at, Jerry's or the other chap's?

Of course, if the fish are out there in hundreds, and hungry, they will snap at anything, and the boarder at the Inn will get his share. But even then he will probably not get so large a share as will Mr. Rogers. To hook a good-sized bluefish is one thing, to keep him on the hook while you pull him through shallow water and up the beach is another. The "Gull Inner" will lose a good many and even Jerry a few. That is part of the fun of bluefishing; you are never quite sure of your prey until you have him safe ashore or in the boat.

Bluefish are eccentric and undependable creatures. They are on the grounds one day and somewhere else the next. And bluefishing near Cape Cod is particularly undependable because there are long stretches of time when they are not in that vicinity at all. When I was a boy, I remember afternoons on the outer beach at Chatham — the South Beach this was and it has gone now;

the sea washed it away years ago—I remember sitting on that beach and watching a long row, a row of at least thirty men and youths, heaving and hauling in the surf, and as the picture comes back to my mind, it seems as if someone of that thirty had a fish on his hook always. And often four or five were coming in at the same time. This was fifty years ago, but I have never forgotten it.

They were as plentiful as that. And yet, a dozen or fifteen years later, to catch a bluefish along the Cape coast, either by heaving or hauling, or by trolling from a boat, was a rarity, something to be talked about. Even the trapping of three or four in a weir was an event. The bluefish were not in our waters, that is all. They had gone elsewhere, and where or why no one seemed to know. Most of us were sure they would never come back.

The old men, however, the old-time professional fishermen, merely shrugged and grinned. They would come back some day, when they were “good and ready.” It had happened before—this bluefish desertion of Cape Cod. They had gone, had absented themselves for years and years, had come back and had now gone again. To quote one old fellow:

“When I was a young one, there wa’n’t hardly any, but my grandfather remembered when there was millions. They got scurcer and scurcer and then cleared out altogether, same as they have now. ’Course I remember when they got thick again—you remember that time—and now we’ve seen ’em quit for another spell. Grandfather and the rest of the old folks used to say, ‘Forty

year apart for bluefishin'.' You'll figure there won't be any another one, and then we'll commence to catch a few. Next summer there'll be more. And so on till they're thicker than fiddlers in Clink. Then they'll commence to sag off again and by and by there won't be none, same as just now. But along towards the end of the forty-year stretch here they be, to stick around for another spell. Ten year on and forty off for good bluefishin'; you hear what I'm tellin' you."

We heard him, as he had heard his grandfather, but we paid little attention to either of them. It was true that there had been practically no bluefishing near Cape Cod for forty years, or thereabouts, but we refused to believe the prophecy of their reappearance.

But we are on the verge of belief now. Four years ago—in 1931, I think it was—rumors began to spread up and down the Cape that boats from Falmouth and Osterville and the Vineyard were catching a few bluefish with a troll. Of course we hastened to prove the truth or falsity of these rumors. We hired a boat at Osterville and spent a day trolling in the waters of Vineyard Sound. We caught—nothing. We did not have even a solitary "strike." We returned home discouraged and disgusted. The reports we had heard were what one old Caper said when he first tasted charlotte russe, "All froth and nawthin'."

But in the summer of 1932 I, myself, caught three bluefish. A pretty poor total, considering the number of trips we made, but something, at least, beside "froth and nawthin'." In '33 I raised my total to fifteen. And last

summer I had good fishing, really good. Our best day's catch, three lines in the boat, was twenty-three, but other boats caught as many as forty in an afternoon.

So there you are. Is there truth in the "ten years on and forty years off" saying? We do not know, but we do know that there were bluefish in our bays and over our shoals where we were young, that there were none for at least forty years, and that last summer there were a great many. Why? Please ask us an easier one.

I want to — yes, I am going to — say something about trolling for bluefish from a boat, but before we leave heaving and hauling altogether, I think a few words should be said about the lure the heaver and hauler almost always uses — the "drail."

Why it is a "drail", we know not. It is, and on Cape Cod it has always been, so far as I can learn. The troller from a boat uses one of those Japanese feather baits — the lure with a metal head set with glass eyes and a feathered tail covering the hook — but the genuine heaver and hauler still sticks to his drail. It — the drail — is made of some heavy metal, is bright and shiny and has the hook rigidly set in its after end. I mention the "rigidly" because the hook attached to the feather bait usually swings loose from a ring. Pulled — or "hauled" — through the water, it looks like a rapidly swimming sand eel or "shiner" and the bluefish darts to snap at it. This is an error of judgment on his part.

In former days, the heaver and hauler often covered his drail with an eelskin. The dried skin was pulled over the metal with the tail flopping loosely about the hook.

Some old-timers still cover their drails in this way. It is a good bait, especially for striped bass.

And now, with that drail subject out of the way, we can chat about the other kind of bluefishing — the trolling from a boat. It is what I have been eager to talk about ever since I began to write this chapter.

Forty years ago, to set out for this day's bluefishing was to start upon an adventure. We knew, of course, how and when it would begin, but how and when it might end were matters beyond the knowledge of man — any man, even Cap'n Ben, the veteran in charge of the boat.

It was Cap'n Ben who had invited us and we never refused an invitation to go anywhere with him, either on land or sea. To make a picnic or a clambake or a fishing excursion a complete success, it was only necessary to have Cap'n Ben along. Almost sixty years old he was in those days, but looking not more than fifty, and thinking and speaking and acting far younger than that. Cape Cod born and brought up; mate of a square-rigged ship at eighteen; captain at twenty and for a dozen years thereafter; then, for another ten, in charge of a fleet of tugs for an American railway company building a breakwater at a Mexican port; then variously active afloat and ashore; and, finally, coming back to his native town to settle down and "take it easy" with his family for the remainder of his life. This was Cap'n Ben's record up to that time.

A great talker, every sentence flavored with dry wit, a marvellous story-teller, always with an apt and worthwhile story to tell; kindly, generous, a firm friend who

made friends wherever he went; a good citizen and a straightforward, honest, self-respecting and respected man. Ah, Cap'n Ben, we miss you and shall never forget you. We knew many with more worldly wealth than you possessed and the number upon whom the world had bestowed its honors, but you were, and in our memories always will be, the ideal Cape Codder of the Cape's yesterdays.

We are up early in the morning of our bluefishing day. My cousin Edgar — twenty years older than myself, who is another Cape Codder of the old school and a grand fellow — is going with us and so is his daughter. Our share of the picnic provision is packed and ready and we set out across the fields along the path leading to the Clam Pond, the salt-water inlet making up into the town from the harbor, where Cap'n Ben's catboat lies at her moorings.

It is only half-past seven, but Cap'n Ben and his daughter are there before us. Perhaps it should be mentioned here that the Cap'n's conception of "taking it easy" is to turn out every morning at six, feed the hens and the pig, turn the cow out to pasture, build the fire, put the kettle on, eat breakfast, and then idle away the hours between breakfast and dinner, and dinner and supper, by whitewashing the barn, chopping wood, hoeing the garden, digging a few clams or raking a few quahaugs, trimming the hedge, looking after his boat, mowing the pasture lot, and doing such other chores as seem to him to require attention around the place. After supper — except on Sunday — he usually walked up to the

Skippers' Club in the village where, in company with other retired salt-water veterans, he played euchre until ten o'clock.

Today, of course, is an exception — this is, for him, a holiday — so he turns out at five-thirty instead of six, goes down to the Clam Pond and washes out and scrubs the cockpit of his catboat from cabin door to stern thwart inclusive. The boat, with his daughter and himself aboard, are waiting for us at the little pier when we arrive. Her name — the boat's we mean, but it is his daughter's also — is *Helen B.*

Cap'n Ben greets us with a cheerful hail, mentions that it is a fine day, wind a little south of west but liable to haul more to the east'ard before night, helps us stow the food basket aboard, tells us to sit anywhere so long as we're comf'table, offers Cousin Edgar a cigar, lights his own pipe, and proceeds to cast off from the pier, hoist sail and get under way. We offer to help, but he waves us aside.

"If a man can't handle a craft of this size by himself he ought to stay ashore," he observes. "This is my job and I'm used to it. Yours is to set aft and look handsome till it's time to put the lines over. When you get 'em over, let's hope you catch something, but don't get too impatient if you don't. . . . Well, well, that reminds me. When I was down in Mexico, I owned a boat about as big as this one and I used to go out in her after kingfish, or barracouta or red snapper — whatever happened to come along. The United States consul down there was a good fellow and sometimes he'd go with me. One trip

he fetched a friend with him, a man from up this way somewhere; down South on a cruise he was. Nice, agreeable chap; only fault I had to find with him was that he had so little to find with himself, if you understand what I mean. Well, we trolled and trolled — fishing with hand lines we was, of course — but we never got as much as a nibble; poor fishing as ever I saw. The Consul was good-natured about it; he'd had bad luck before, but his friend got pretty fussy and snappish after we'd been out an hour or two and had consider'ble to say about wasting time, and the like of that.

"Finally he went into the cabin, leaving his line strung out astern, and I said to the Consul, 'We've got to do something to stir up a little excitement for your chummy,' I said. 'Let's give him something to haul aboard, anyhow.' So — ho, ho — I had a pair of brand-new long-legged leather boots aboard, same as we used to wear in those days. I wasn't wearing 'em then, though; 'twas too hot and I had on an old pair of slippers. I hauled in that fellow's line, hitched one of those boots on with the hook through the strap, and let it out again full length.

"When he came out of the cabin and got a-hold of that line, I tell you there was fun. 'There's something on here,' he sung out. 'Something big, too. Lord A'mighty, how he pulls!' It did pull, too, for there was a good breeze blowing, the boat was going at a fast clip, and that big boot, full of water, was sagging back and yanking from one side to the other, for all the world like a twenty-pound fish.

"Ho-ho! How excited he was! He hauled in line and he let it out. We asked if he didn't want us to help him land the thing, but he shoved us away. 'You got to play a fish like this,' he says, his face red as a fireman's shirt. 'Let me alone. I've handled more game fish than you fellows ever saw.'

"So we let him alone. And, after ten minutes or so, he worked that boot up alongside the boat. When he saw *'twas* a boot, he didn't say a word, just glared at the Consul and me as if he'd like to kill us. He was so mad we didn't laugh as much as we wanted to, figured it wouldn't be good judgment. Next thing we knew, he'd out with his jackknife, cut the line, and let boot and hook and everything go astern. Then he slammed down into the cabin and stayed there till dinner time. And the dinner didn't interest him much either; he was too mad to eat.

"Well, it was a good joke, but I wasn't quite sure whether it was on him or me. He'd lost a fish he never had; but I'd lost a brand-new boot that had cost me consider'ble money. Course I had one left, but one boot isn't much good to a two-legged man. He was still mad when we got ashore that afternoon and tramped off without any 'Thank yous' and hardly so much as a good-by. I never expected to hear from him again."

"Did you ever hear from him?" we ask.

"Eh? Ho, ho! Why, yes, I did. About a month or so afterwards, I got a package from New York. In it was a fine pair of glasses, same as we used aboard ship, marine glasses they call 'em. There was a note with 'em.

There was no name signed to it, but it said: 'I am swapping these for that boot of yours.' Ho, ho! He was all right, that fellow, after he cooled off."

And so on, while the *Helen B.* sails out through the half-mile narrows leading to the harbor. Cap'n Ben calls those narrows "The Dardanelles", because he says they remind him of the Dardanelles Straits on the way to the Sea of Marmora and Constantinople.

"The Dardanelles is a mean place to get through with a sailing vessel," he explains. "Wind blows about every-which-way, including up and down, and there's the regular Old Harry of a tide running. Nice place to be caught in a calm with the tide against you, the Dardanelles is. These narrows remind me of it, only a mighty sight smaller and shorter. Let's hope we don't have a calm when we come back this way tonight. Tide'll be against us then."

We cross the harbor, come about and sail out past the Point of Beach into the open Sound. The gulls on the dipping and rising spar buoys turn their heads in our direction, but they do not fly; they are accustomed to boats.

Three miles more and Cap'n Ben orders the lines put over. The heavy drails move rapidly astern; their own weight and the pull of the boat is sufficient to make them tug heavily at our hands. We are all wearing heavy cotton gloves or rubber fingerstalls. A ten-pound blue-fish at the end of a hundred feet of wet line is no help to a delicate skin. We sail on, making long tacks. Centre Cove, with its cluster of fishing and gunning

shanties, is abreast us now, perhaps two miles distant. The town we have left is far astern, a cluster of brown roofs, amid treetops, with the spires of two meeting-houses rising above them.

Cap'n Ben begins another yarn. About the darky fisherman in the West Indies this time.

"So the craft was drifting into shoal water and the skipper yelled, 'T'row de hank! T'row de hank! Oh, my gar! wy don't you do wat I tell? Don't you see we run aground? T'row de *hank!*'"

"And the hand—there was only one aboard—he yelled back, 'Cap'n, de hank, she ain't got no 'tring on her.'

" "'Tring or no 'tring, you do wat I tell. Let 'er go.'

"So they hove over the anchor with no rope on it and—eh? What? What? Hang on to him, Nellie!"

Helen, his daughter, is standing, an expression of grim determination on her face, and her line, thirty feet of it at least, tautly clear of wave tops. She is "hauling" with all her might. Far astern there is a splash.

Cousin Edgar springs to his feet. "I've got one, too!" he shouts.

Ah, well, it was sport. Good sport, wonderful sport. And, even nowadays, in a motorboat, and especially with a rod and reel, the tug and fight of a game bluefish is gloriously exciting. It does seem to me that it was better sport when we were young, but very likely it was not. We enjoyed it more, that is all. Probably I should enjoy it as much now, if that same party could set sail together. Cousin Edgar and his daughter and Helen and Cap'n Ben.

. . . Well, the memory is mine, if the reality can never again be.

At twelve o'clock we went ashore at Centre Cove and the men dug clams and the girls made chowder. We ate — how we ate! Chowder and sandwiches and boiled eggs and cold chicken and hot coffee and molasses cookies and sugar cookies and pie and apple puffs and "brambles." "Brambles"? Oh, they are little "turnovers", with chopped raisins and white of egg and lemon and — and — oh, I don't remember the other ingredients, but I do not forget the brambles, although I am ashamed to remember how many I ate. And no call for soda-mint tablets afterward, either.

We started for home late in the afternoon. The wind was dying fast and the tide setting against us. It was after eight when we beat up to Point of Beach; after nine when we reached the upper end of the "Dardanelles." And there the real fight began. A light, very light, head wind, a surging head tide and a narrow channel. Back and forth, tack after tack, gaining but a few feet with each beat. It was half-past twelve when we reached the pier at the inner end of the Clam Pond.

"Presume likely your wife'll think we're all drowned," is Cap'n Ben's parting remark to Cousin Edgar. "Oh, well, women folks are like that. My wife, in her mind, had me cast away or sunk so many times that, along towards the last of it, I used to tell her she looked disappointed when I turned up safe and sound. Good night, all hands. Had a good day and pretty fair luck, too, haven't we?"

Reader, I apologize. I did not intend to keep you so

long aboard that catboat. I should have put you ashore long ago. But we did have good times in those old sailing days. Yes, we did.

In Cap'n Ben's boyhood bluefish along the Cape shores were, so he told us, even more plenty. Big ones, too — ten, twelve and sometimes fifteen pounds. And, by the way, the Cape bluefish, if what we hear is true, are even larger, on the average, than those caught farther south. A six-pound fish, so our Barnegat fishing friends tell us, is considered a fine specimen, whereas last summer we caught many weighing seven and eight pounds each and two that were over nine.

In the market the bluefish brings a high price, and, in the city restaurants, a small section of him, broiled, is a delicacy for which we pay liberally. But in Grandfather's day Cape Codders were inclined to sneer at him as an eatable. To catch him was fun; but why eat him, when there were plenty of cod and bass and halibut and mackerel?

To them — the Capers of Grandfather's generation — the bluefish was a soft fish, a "dark-meated" fish, whereas the flesh of cod and striped bass and plaice and halibut was firm and white and, therefore, fit for food. Mackerel? Oh, yes, a mackerel is a soft, "dark-meated" fish, but a mackerel was, somehow, different. Everyone ate mackerel and had always done so. Sounds queer and ridiculous to modern ears, but the distinction was made. When Cap'n Ben was young, a twelve-pound bluefish could be bought at the wharf for ten cents, provided the purchaser would take it away from there. A half dozen old-time fisher-

men have told me this, adding that they have often seen a boatload of fine bluefish carted off to be used in fertilizing a cornfield.

In October the striped bass feed in the surf along the back of the Cape. Not in great numbers, they are much scarcer than are bluefish in the bluefish season; but they are there and may be caught from the beach, either by "heaving and hauling" or with a surf rod.

They are beautiful fish, those striped bass. Silver-sided, with narrow brown stripes running from head to tail. Big fish, too, sometimes weighing more than fifty pounds, although the average is from six to twelve. One fine specimen which I saw last summer weighed thirty-two and the angler who landed him with rod and reel was a proud — and weary — man. I remember standing years ago on the steps of the post-office at Chatham and seeing a young fellow staggering up the lane — narrow and sandy it was then — leading from the shore. When he came nearer, we understood why he staggered. Over his shoulder was a rope thrust through the gills of a huge fish, the head of which was close to his left ear and the tail of which dragged on the ground at his feet. It was a striped bass and it weighed exactly forty-three pounds. You have seen the fisherman pictured on the cod-liver oil advertisement? This young man looked like the fisherman in that picture when he passed by the post-office steps.

He was the son of the captain of the life-saving station on the outer beach. He — the son — lived in the village and when the father judged, by the signs — flocks of screaming gulls hovering and diving above the breakers

— that the bass were running, he hoisted a private signal on the pole above the station. On this particular occasion the young man saw the signal, rowed across the inlet, and began to heave and haul. At the third heave his drail was seized. Then, for one hour, he ran in and out of the surf and, at last, dragged ashore this monster. I have heard and read of larger striped bass than this, but I have never seen any other as large.

Trolling for mackerel with a light rod and a “jig” is good fun, provided the mackerel choose to bite. I have sailed through millions of them — they were all about the boat, as thick as spectators crowding from a stadium exit at the end of a championship football game — and have caught not one. Then again, we have caught forty or fifty in two hours. The mackerel jig is a small hook with a shining oblong lead above it, a sort of miniature bluefish drail.

And cod — I am not, personally, so keen about cod-fishing. To sit in an anchored boat ten miles from land, rocking and tossing on a ground swell; to feel, at the lower end of a ninety-foot line, a slight nibble; to jerk, and then square your shoulders and pull up, by main strength, fifteen pounds of, apparently, disinterested cod, is not my idea of wild excitement. I have done it a great many times, but — well, I do not look forward to it all winter, as I do to the opening of the bluefish season.

And yet the catching of cod for the market is still an industry in Cape Cod waters and it must not be entirely ignored in this chapter. Besides, not to mention the fish for which our promontory is named would be, at least, ungrateful. Old Captain Bartholemew Gosnold, who chris-

tened the Cape, says, in his report to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1602, which report, by the way, was actually written by one of his company, John Brereton:

We espied an Indian, a young man of proper stature and of a pleasant countenance and after some familiarity with him, we left him at the seaside and returned to our ship where in five or six hours' absence we had pestered our ship so with Codfish that we threw numbers of them overboard again, and surely I am persuaded that in the months of March, April and May there is upon this Coast better fishing and in as great quantity as in Newfoundland.

And his testimonial to Cape Cod as a health resort should not, we think, be omitted.

For the agreeing of this climate we say we found our health and strength all the while we remained there was renewed and increased as notwithstanding our diet and lodging was none the best, yet not one of our company felt the least grudging or inclination to any disease or sickness but were much fatter and in better health than when we went out of England.

There! That is an outlander, an Englishman, speaking. "Much . . . better health than when we went out of England." Better than England! Why, Heaven can be no better than England: our British friends often tell us so — or what amounts to the same thing. I wonder that the Cape hotel-keepers do not print this Gosnold excerpt at the head of their advertisements. *Now* will you make sarcastic reference to "fogs" and such trifles?

Dear me! this has been a long and a very "fishy" chapter. I must get out of my fishing togs and wash the scales from my hands before I begin the next one.



Would You Like for Any?



DON'T misunderstand me, please. I am not complaining because of the scarcity of peddlers on Cape Cod in these modern days. I am not doing that for several reasons, the first—and most important—reason being that I have not noticed any such scarcity. There are peddlers enough, goodness knows. If I were a statistician and had the statistician's habit of placing things end to end in order to impress the reader, I should say that if all the peddlers traveling the Cape during July and August were placed end to end, they would reach from—well, say from Armenia to our front door. And if they did not reach quite so far, we should not complain about that, either.

Our complaint, if we Cape Codders have any, is that

the great majority of them are not the kind of peddlers we used to know. They possess the true peddler characteristics: they are polite, they are suave, they are persuasive and convincing and persistent. Once inside the portals, they are hard to get rid of without assistance from the family pocketbook. Of one traveling vendor of the old breed, it was said that he could make a living peddling brimstone matches in Tophet. These modern successors of his could — and perhaps do — sell embroidered cloths and napkins in houses from which the dining-room furniture had just been removed by the instalment dealer for nonpayment.

Yes, they are like the old-time peddler in this, but in other respects they differ greatly. They make their rounds in motorcars; he made his behind an old horse or on foot. They are comparative strangers; he was a familiar acquaintance. Their accent is that of the foreign-born; his was the native Yankee twang. They begin with, "Is the madam in, please?" He hailed us youngsters by our Christian names and wanted to know if our ma was around anywheres. These are a few of the differences.

Of course, the foregoing applies only to the great majority; there are exceptions. The present-day fish peddler is, more often than not, a native New Englander. But even he drives his automobile and the tin horn is no longer a part of his equipment. And the berry peddler is, almost always, a Portuguese. The fish and berries they sell are good, but, it does seem to me that they are not quite so fresh and flavorsome as those Mother used to buy of Jabez Ryder or the Bassett Boys.

And the tin peddler! Dear, dear! Why, the old-time tin peddler is extinct, isn't he? The local chain stores and the "5 and 10s" have put him out of business, I suppose. The purchase of a new saucepan is no longer an important matter in itself; it is just one more item on the shopping list when one motors to Hyannis or New Bedford or Boston. And payment is made in cash, not in rags at an allowance of so much per pound.

Have rags any commercial value nowadays? Do housewives put them carefully away, silk in one bag and woolen in another, to be swapped later on for a new kettle or a coal hod? Probably not, now that the tin peddler's cart jingles along our roads no more.

Too bad, for he was usually an interesting character, that tin peddler, and his cart a picturesque addition to any landscape. And yet, somehow, I cannot imagine him or his outfit upon a modern cement or asphalt highway. They would not belong—they would not fit there. No, to me, at any rate, they are a part of the road in front of our house, the road upon which the elms and silverleaf poplars cast blue shadows; with the soft dust in its ruts, the dust that felt hot and velvety when your bare feet "scuffed" through it; the road with the picket fences along its edges and with wooden hitching posts by the gates, their tops gnawed into queer shapes.

Looking up *that* road, one can see him coming—even now I can see him plainly. A horse's head bobbing methodically and sedately, a cloud of dust rising behind it, and above that dust a high fringe of new yellow brooms, brush-end up like plumes, surmounting a gorgeous affair

like a circus wagon, painted an enthusiastic crimson and a-glitter with silver flashes.

"Mother! Mother! Here is the tin peddler!"

The circus wagon draws up beside our hitching post. It is not a quiet approach—no, indeed! Bells on the horse's neck jingle, and every hod and kettle rattles. Mr. Cahoon jams the loop of the reins in the cranny between the whip-socket and the dash and climbs down from his high seat. He smiles upon me. It is something to be smiled upon by kings and generals and tin peddlers and the gracious favor is appreciated.

"Hello, sonny! Well, how does your corporation seem to segasiate these days, eh?"

I do not know what it is all about but, on the chance, I blushinglly admit that I am all right.

"Fine, fine! Your ma's to home, ain't she?"

"Yes, sir. She knows you've come. I told her."

He moves up the path to the side door, I and the other children of the neighborhood and a dog or two at his heels. Mother and Grandmother, and Aunt Mary too, very likely, are there to meet him. The preliminaries must be gone through, of course; there is the weather to be commented upon and bits of news and gossip from one end of the county to the other to be offered and discussed. Then Mr. Cahoon edges diplomatically toward business.

"I've got some of the finest stewpans ever I handled, I do believe," he observes. "Patent contraption, with covers onto 'em, they are. Somethin' brand-new. My wife, she's crazy about the one she's got; says she wouldn't

be without it for nothin'. I don't know as you folks'll be interested, but I just thought I'd mention 'em. Ain't got but a couple left, been sellin' one at about every house since I started. . . . Want to look at 'em, do you? All right, I'll fetch one in. Ain't got any old rags laid by, 'tain't likely, I suppose? I'm allowin' a little mite more for rags than I was. Rag market's gone up, seems so."

When the transaction is finally completed, our family possesses one of the new patent stewpans and a new broom and Mr. Cahoon is richer by eight pounds of rags and forty-three cents in coin. A half hour after the crimson cart stopped by our post it is under way again. Thirty minutes for a trade no more important than that! Sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? But time did not seem to count for so much then—not on the Cape and in our town. And life was simpler—so much simpler. Yes, and the tin peddler did not come around every day, either.

Mr. Cahoon was the most spectacular peddler with whom we were acquainted, but there were others. Uncle Enoch was one of those others. There was nothing spectacular about Uncle Enoch. He no doubt had a surname, but I never heard it mentioned. He was a little, dried-up Yankee, whiskered and shabbily dressed, and he carried two ancient valises. The goods he offered for sale were principally "notions"—pins and needles and tape and thread—that sort of thing, with a few cotton handkerchiefs and aprons as a side line. He was a relic of still earlier and simpler days and his customers patronized him for old time's sake more than anything else.

Many stories were told of Uncle Enoch, of his eccen-

tricies, of his odd remarks and still odder behavior. Many of these tales are more or less pointless, but there was one which used to amuse us and which, during my earlier and more trustful years, I accepted as authentic. I do not so accept it now, however. Having heard it told, with slight variations, of peddlers or storekeepers in localities ranging from Maine to Connecticut, I begin to wonder whether there is any truth in it at all. Picking up a story and then making it a better one by fitting it to a character in one's immediate locality seems to be a universal bad habit. I expect to say more on this subject in another chapter, however, so we will drop it now. At any rate, here is the Uncle Enoch yarn as it came to us years ago.

Uncle Enoch, making his rounds, called late in the afternoon, at a house in—well, any Cape town you care to select. He had been peddling all day and his stock was depleted. The mistress of the house informed him that she would purchase a paper of pins. Uncle Enoch looked doubtful.

“Well, now, ma’am, I don’t know,” he said. “You see, I’m cal’latin’ to stop in to three or four more houses along the road here afore I quit, and I’ve only got one paper of pins left. If I sell the whole of that to you, I won’t have none left for my other customers.”

So he tore the paper in two and sold her one half of it.

You have heard it before? Of course you have. And it was not Uncle Enoch who sold the half paper of pins, but John Smith or William Brown or Henry Robinson. And it was not pins he sold, but tobacco or needles or sweet potatoes. All right; far be it from me to dispute

your veracity. You say you know? Well, I used to think I knew.

I do know that there used to be an Uncle Enoch, because I saw him with my own eyes. If it were not for that, I should, by this time, have begun to doubt that there ever was any such person. It is disheartening, the way in which time makes skeptics of us all. And someone has said that before, too.

I do wish the present-day fish peddler had not discarded that tin horn of his. Its cheerful toot was a familiar sound along our roads. And he has, apparently, discarded most of his originality and eccentricity along with it. Perhaps it was easier to be original in a fish cart than it is to be so in a fish automobile. Cape Cod fish peddlers no longer cry their wares; at least, it has been a long time since I heard one do so. Some of those cries were original enough.

"Fresh codfish, right off the vines!"

Do you remember that one?

And then there was the old chap who heralded his coming, first with the blast from the horn and then with the melodious yell:

"Would you like for any codfish, plaice fish, squiteague, tautog or-r fresh mackerel?"

I wish I were capable of writing the music of that call. For it *was* musical—almost a song. This writer cannot sing, and his attempts in that direction are always promptly discouraged, but merely to print the words of that fish peddler's plea to hoped-for customers is not enough; they should have the notes above them. Slow and deliberate, and ending on a rising inflection.

“Would — you — like — for — any codfish, plaice fish, squiteague, tautog *or-r* fresh mack-er-el?”

Go up on the “or-r” and stay there; that may give you some idea of what it was like.

This man had, as a rival in the same line of business, an ancient whose merchandising cart had been, in the beginning, a carryall. Already, in these pages, the carryall has been mentioned a good many times, but the fact is that to chat of the Cape as it was fifty or sixty years ago cannot be done without frequent mention of that vehicle. Practically every family with sufficient means to own a horse also owned a carryall. A buggy, perhaps, but a carryall almost surely. Every oldster will remember it well, but the younger generation have, probably, never seen one. Black, high, square, with isinglass-windowed curtains which buttoned in place, and doors at the sides. The carriage to be used when all the family were going somewhere.

The carryall was so much a part of Cape Cod’s yesterday that to refer to it is to bring to yesterday’s Cape Coder all sorts of memories, pleasant or otherwise. He rode in it to funerals and to weddings, to the Barnstable Cattle Show and Fair or to the Yarmouth camp meeting; to worship on Sunday morning and to call upon Cousin Josiah’s people at the west end of the town in the afternoon.

And — of course it was bound to happen — this digression toward the carryall brings recollections to my own mind, many of them, but one in particular. The story has nothing to do with peddlers, but that need not pre-



“WOULD YOU LIKE FOR ANY?”

vent my telling it. I intended to tell it somewhere in this book and why not here?

When I was a very, very small boy, our family — Aunt Mary, Mother and Grandmother — decided to take an all-day trip to Chatham to see the old lighthouses. I — the four-year-old — was to go too, of course. The Chatham twin lights, with the little brick dwelling for the light-keeper between them, were no novelty to the grownups. They — the lights and the brick house — had stood on the high bluff at the southern end of Chatham village for years and our people had visited them often.

But there was an especial reason for this particular visit. Old Ocean had been playing his tricks again. The storms of the two preceding winters had broken through the outer beach, the tides had widened the opening, and now, instead of standing safe and secure half a mile from the lines of surf, the twin lights were tottering precariously on the very edge of a rapidly caving fifty-foot bank, with the curling breakers at its very foot. The government engineers had decided that they could not be protected or moved. A pair of new lighthouses and a new home for the keeper were in process of erection a hundred yards back and on the other side of the road. The old ones were abandoned to tumble to destruction — which they eventually did.

So, if our family were to see once more those old lighthouses intact, haste was essential. The visit was to be a sort of last look at the remains, so to speak.

We had no horse or carriage of our own, therefore they must be hired at the local livery stable. Unfortunately,

that was out of the question; our application was late and every available rig was already engaged for the day set for our trip. Then Grandmother remembered that Mr. Seth Lucas owned a horse of a kind and a carryall of a sort, and that he occasionally "let" the combination when not using it himself. Aunt Mary called upon Mr. Lucas and the bargain was made.

But not without a wavering on the part of the owner.

"Well," he drawled, "I tell you. You say you ain't much used to drivin' and you want a quiet, steady horse. That part'll be all right. My horse is steady enough; I've had him a good many years and he ain't shied at nothin' yet. *He's* all right for you. But the kerryall — well, now, I'll tell you about that. I've had that kerryall consider'ble longer'n I have the horse and she ain't in what you might call fust-class shape. It's the springs underneath her that's the main trouble; they're pretty shaky. Oh, they'll hold you folks up, all right, but you mustn't put no sudden strain on 'em. Be careful when you turn around, that's the main thing."

Aunt Mary promised to be careful and the equipage was delivered at our hitching post on the morning appointed. The seating arrangement assigned Aunt Mary and Mother to the front seat and Grandmother and myself to the back. Aunt Mary was the driver, as she always was on our family excursions. It was a cool day, the curtains were tightly buttoned down, and therefore the view from the back seat was limited — to me, the youngster, very much so. The little windows in the curtains were far above my head and only by peering between the shoul-

ders of the front-seat occupants could I catch glimpses of the road ahead.

The ten-mile ride through the woods was an experience of which I, personally, remember but little. I was happy because we were riding, and riding a long way, which was a rare treat to me in those early days. But I often heard the other members of the party speak of it afterward and they were unanimous in declaring it to have been anything but a treat, so far as they were concerned.

Mr. Lucas had not exaggerated when he guaranteed his horse to be "steady." He was — a steady walker. Aunt Mary chirruped and commanded and, occasionally in desperation, applied the whip, but the animal continued to walk. Or if, after the lash had descended until the fur on his ancient rear was crisscrossed with weals, he did manage to break into a jerky trot, the display of energy lasted not more than a minute or two. He was walking again after that. It took us, so Aunt Mary said, just two hours and a half to travel those ten miles.

And the old carryall! It bounced and rocked and rattled and squealed over the inequalities of that rutted, sandy, dusty road. The adults were members of a salt-water seasoned family and I, myself, must, I suppose, have inherited some of that seasoning — at any rate no one was seasick. Possibly the fear of imminent shipwreck made us immune to mere discomfort. Every time the carriage rounded a bend in the road, we expected it to come apart. That expectation was a prophecy, as we discovered later, when we reached our destination and entered the yard before the abandoned lighthouses.

Aunt Mary drove only occasionally and she made the mistake of turning too short. The battered old body of the carryall rose on its rear wheels as the turn was made, rose and continued to rise. It listed heavily to port. I slid down the seat upon Grandmother and she slid into the corner. She screamed and I yelled in panic. Then the whole body broke loose from the fastenings which were supposed to hold it in place and slid on its side to the ground, carrying its occupants with it. The wheels and underbody, relieved of the weight, settled back to a level once more and the old horse stopped and turned his head, probably to enjoy the spectacle.

I was, as I have said, only four years old, but I have never forgotten that experience. Why should I? It is the only one of its kind I ever had, or expect to have — and, for the matter of that, I have never heard of another like it. The stuffy, oilcloth-covered seat cushion had turned upside down and covered my head, so I was in pitch darkness, Grandmother was screaming and I — well, my screams were somewhat muffled by the seat cushion but, or so they have often told me, I did very well, considering.

We were disinterred, all four of us, by the neighbors who hurried to the rescue, and no one was in the least hurt, even bruised or scratched. Aunt Mary's first thought, after she and her fellow castaways were afoot once more, was of the horse.

"Oh, where is he?" she demanded hysterically. "Has he run away?"

"Ma'am," a kind-hearted Chatham lobsterman assured her, "that horse ain't two foot off. He *couldn't* run away; he forgot how to run long ago."

He and his companions lifted the carryall body on to the springs once more and, after inspecting the light-houses and giving a long look at the threatening breakers at the foot of the bluff, we gingerly got aboard and made the homeward journey safely. The horse walked *all* the way this time and he was permitted, even encouraged, to do just that. Our family never patronized the Lucas stable again. Lucas, himself, offered few apologies.

"I told you," was his reminder, "to be careful how you turned 'round. Guess likely I'll have to have that kerryall tinkered up some. Been cal'latin' to do it for quite a spell."

There! Now we can go back to our peddlers. What sent me off on the carryall tack, anyway? Oh, yes, we were talking of the peddler who sold fish from a carryall; that was it. He did so sell them. He had removed the rear seat and rigged an icebox in its place.

He was a peculiar specimen. All Codders of the vintage of the '80's and '90's will remember him. A garrulous talker and deaf as a haddock. That comparison is used because it fits the subject we are supposed to be — or should be — discussing, and because "deaf as a haddock" is a common expression alongshore. How deaf a haddock may be, or how anyone knows he is deaf at all, are questions I will not presume to answer.

But this fish peddler was deaf; there was no doubt of that. And his imperfect hearing was not altogether a curse — in business. One summer he made weekly calls at our back door and sold fish each time. At the end of the season, when he presented his bill, there was a decided difference between his footings and ours, a difference much in his favor. After protesting for twenty minutes or

so that there could be no mistake, he was prevailed upon to go over the figures with us. When, at last, forced to acknowledge that we were right and he was wrong, he shook his head.

"Well, now, ain't that a shame," he observed sadly. "That's what comes of bein' hard of hearin'. I'm gettin' so plaguey deaf nowadays I can't add."

Once, toward the latter part of his life, our motorcar caught up with his fish carryall in a narrow, across-the-Cape road. Until he moved to the side, there was no room to pass and, for almost a mile, we crept along behind him, blowing our horn persistently. At last a bewhiskered face protruded beyond the edge of the carryall curtain and turned in our direction and a melancholy voice came from the mouth behind the whiskers.

"I'm deaf," it explained sadly. "I don't hear ye."

The face disappeared and we crept on for another half mile until the road widened and we could squeeze by.

He peddles fish no longer and neither does our old friend, who begged to know if we "would like for any." The fish sellers whom we patronize now blow no horns except those attached to their cars. And their wares are differently named. When we buy a weakfish we realize, of course, that we are buying a squiteague, but none of these peddlers call him that.

And they do not carry "cod cheeks" or "tongues and sounds" any more.

We miss the old-timers.



Grist to the Mill



THERE are not so many of them now, more is the pity. The driver of the motorcar, or his passenger on the rear seat, sometimes sees, in the field beside the road, or on the crest of a distant hill, a gray-shingled tower with a conical roof and gaunt arms rising above it. But there are no sails covering those skeleton arms and the arms never turn. The narrow windows are tightly shut and the weather-beaten door has, obviously, not been opened for many a day. Possibly there is a placard calling attention to the fact that this is the "oldest windmill on Cape Cod" or something of the sort, but no sign is needed to emphasize the fact that the windmill is now but a relic left over from Cape Cod's yesterday

and not, as it used to be, a busy, vital part of Cape life.

How many genuine old windmills, fitted with stones and gear for grinding, still remain standing in Barnstable County I do not know. A dozen perhaps — and perhaps more, though I should be inclined to doubt it. And of that dozen only a very few stand on the original sites. It is easy to move an old-time windmill. Put together with strong wooden pegs, they could be taken down in sections and shifted from one locality to another without great trouble. As the Cape Codder ceased to raise his own corn and rye and oats, the miller's business fell off and, one by one, the mills were abandoned. Some were torn down, the lumber and beams used for building sheds and fences, and the heavy millstones carted away to be installed as doorsteps for dwellings. Some of Cape Cod's older houses and many of its newer cottages have millstones beneath and before their front doors.

The abandoned mills, those not torn down, were left to fall to ruin until, not so many years ago, some architect on the lookout for novelty, or some cottage owner with an eye for the picturesque, conceived the idea that an old windmill would be a colorful and quaint addition to a summer estate. Not to use for the purpose for which it was originally built — oh, no — but as something to look at and talk about, — an ornament befitting the locality. And, developing from that happy thought, sprang another: Why not use the interior of the mill as a guest house, or a children's playroom, or a bathhouse with showers and dressing-rooms? And so the half-ruined structure was bought for a low price, taken apart and borne

away, to rise again, miles from its original location, looking from the outside much as it had always looked, but, once the threshold was crossed, transformed beyond recognition.

What would Mr. Seth Higbee, the windmill owner and operator in our town when we were young, think if he could enter today the old mill which was once his property? The ground floor, where the stones used to turn slowly, with the yellow corn meal falling from between them, is now a cheerful little lounging-room. The narrow stairs, with their treads worn in hollows, are replaced by a wider flight with a rope handrail, painted white and looking very trim and nautical and shipshape. The second story, the little six-sided or eight-sided room where the great shaft used to turn and the huge wooden cogwheels revolve, is now fitted with neat beds, set against the wall like the berths in a ship's forecastle — although no forecastle berths I ever saw had down mattresses and linen sheets — and there are antique hooked rugs on the floor and Currier and Ives prints on the walls. And, leading from the lounging-room below, is a small ell furnished and equipped as a very modern bathroom, with a porcelain tub and a shower and "hot and cold" and all the rest of it.

This, you see, is Mrs. Coles-Graham's little guest house which, as she explains, is so convenient when Raymond brings some of his college friends home with him for June week-ends or during the summer vacation. "They can be all by themselves here and they do have such marvellous good times." Which is doubtless true, but does

not alter the fact that the shell of this charming guest house was once the exterior of Mr. Seth Higbee's windmill, as it had been his father's and grandfather's before him, and that, as I observed just now, I should very much enjoy being able to conduct Mr. Higbee into and through it and listen to his remarks during the tour of inspection.

And yet, remembering Mr. Higbee and some other remarks of his, made when the mill machinery was not working as it should, perhaps it is just as well that I cannot indulge in that enjoyment. Seth was inclined, under stress, to forget the saying concerning little pitchers and big ears. Even in these days of an outspoken press we, probably, could not record those remarks. Yes, it is just as well.

And do not, please, get the idea that I am sneering at Mrs. Coles-Graham or her guest house. In my humble opinion she has done a very gracious and fitting thing. She has preserved for the Cape Cod landscape something which belonged to it for more than a century; and, as for her guest house — well, it *is* charming and I wish we might own one just like it.

To think of the old Cape, yesterday's Cape, without its windmills is impossible. They were such a part of it. In practically every town there was one, and sometimes two or three. Most of them stood on the crests of little hills, where the wind, no matter from which direction it might blow, was certain to catch the sails. The head of the mill, as of course everyone knows, was constructed to turn on a greased track, and from the mill head, on the side opposite to that from which the shaft bearing the arms and

sails projected, was a long pole, as big as a schooner's main boom, reaching slantwise toward the ground. On the end of this pole or boom a spoked wheel was attached. On a grinding day the miller and his helper rolled the wheel along the ground until the mill head faced the wind. Then they were ready to begin operations.

The Cape windmills were always picturesque and those which still stand are so yet. But in Great-grandfather's day and in Grandfather's — yes, and in Father's too — they were much more than that. Even in my own youth some of them were in use at certain seasons of the year. I can remember seeing the slats of the arms covered with canvas and the arms themselves revolving against the sky as I looked up at them. I can remember the groaning of the shaft as it turned and, when we went inside, the squeaking and trembling of the whole structure.

What I remember more clearly than anything else, however, is the smell of that mill interior. A warm, sweet, musty smell. No, not exactly musty either; a — a — oh, it is impossible to describe it as it should be. It was the smell of the inside of a windmill when grinding was going on; that is the best I can do. If you, any of you, have smelt it, you know what it was like. If you have not —

Do you remember the story of the darky sitting disconsolate on a log a hundred yards or so from the door of his cabin in the woods? To him came a friend, running, out of breath, and very much excited.

"Sam! Sam!" he gasped. "Dere's a wildcat gone right in de back do' ob yo' house. Right in dere where yo' wife is!"

Sam looked up and sadly shook his head.

"Well," he observed, "he'll hab to git out de bes' way he kin, dat's all I got to say."

And those not familiar with that windmill smell will have to imagine it as best they can.

I remember, too, the "feel" of the hot corn or rye meal, as it poured from between the turning millstones upon our hands, as we thrust them into the trough. Also what Mr. Higbee said when he caught us with our hands in that trough.

It was fun to climb the narrow, rickety stairs to the upper floor and watch the corn or rye or oats being poured from the bags into the hopper. It was fun to hang about the mill on a grinding day and listen to the yarns spun by the old fellows waiting for their grists to be ground — sea yarns or fish yarns they were mostly. But the keenest memories are of the meal itself, or of the muffins and mush made from it and served at the breakfast table in our house.

Am I the only one with lingering memories of new rye muffins or new rye mush? I hope not. It cannot be possible that mine is the only palate tingling at the recollection of those delectable dainties. The muffins — well, they were baked in an iron muffin pan, and our muffins were not round but oblong. In the new rye season Mother served them almost every morning. Hot — very hot; the butter melted and dripped when it was spread on one of them.

Of course, we had rye muffins at other times during the year, but they were not quite so good. It was in the "new rye" season that they were particularly delicious.



THE OLD WINDMILL AT STAGE HARBOR

The rye had just been cut and threshed and taken to the mill. From that mill it came directly to our house, with all its freshness and flavor. Old rye meal — store meal — did not have that flavor, and that which you buy nowadays has, comparatively speaking, no flavor at all. You need not take my word for it; ask any old Cape Codder.

Grandmother used to say: "New rye is the only kind worth eating, and the newer it is the better."

And new rye mush! It was prepared and cooked like any other mush — like hasty pudding, for example. But, whereas hasty pudding, being made with corn meal, was a decided blond, new rye mush was a brunette. Sometimes we had it for breakfast, with sugar or brown sugar or molasses, and milk. Occasionally it was given us as a dessert at dinner, and then, in place of milk, there was cream.

Now cream, in these days, is an everyday item on the household bill of fare. The milkman leaves the jar on the back steps each morning. But the cream he leaves is not the kind of cream we poured over our new rye mush at the dinner table back in the "yesterdays." I insist that it is not.

We — the family, that is — bought that cream from old Mrs. Lake, who lived in the big "square top" house diagonally across the road from ours. Mrs. Lake — she was the widow of Captain Elnathan Lake, who was lost at sea sometime in the 50's — owned a cow, a blooded Jersey. And, although she, being a lady of independent means, did not have to sell milk or cream or anything else for money — she took great pains to keep our minds clear

of any doubt on that point — she occasionally accommodated her neighbors.

When I, the boy of the family, was sent over to Mrs. Lake's with the pitcher, I was invariably instructed to be very careful how I asked for the accommodation. The formula was something like this:

"Morning, Mrs. Lake. Mother wonders if you could possibly let her have a little cream this morning. She hates to bother you, but we're going to have company for dinner today. Of course, she says you mustn't do it if it's any trouble at all, only she says there is no cream like yours in *this* town and everybody knows it."

Mrs. Lake looks at me over her spectacles. Her first remark is in the form of a question. She wants to know what company we are going to have.

I tell her — it is the minister and his wife, perhaps. She thinks this over and observes that she understood the minister was at our house for dinner only a fortnight ago, or such matter. I tell her it was nearly a month ago, and she says something about losing all run of time, living sole alone, the way she does. Then, after a brief interval of silence, she says:

"Well, I don't know. 'Twas only yesterday, or the day before, that Cap'n Jonathan's wife sent their hired man here after cream, and I had to send 'em word I didn't have any to spare. But I like to help out your folks if I can. That cow of mine is an awful good milker, if I do say so, so maybe I can let you have a little. I'll go see. You can come along, if you want to."

I do want to, so I follow her through the kitchen —

neat as neat can be, that kitchen is — and into the buttery. The Lake buttery is a large one, twice as big as ours at home — Captain Elnathan's father was one of the town's rich men when he built that house — and to the long, dark, cool "milk room" beyond. That milk room had a brick floor and a long shelf with a row of glistening pans upon it, each pan full to the brim with milk. This milk was not white, like that Mr. Darius Bassett brought to our door daily, but yellow, a rich, golden yellow.

Mrs. Lake takes a sea-clam shell from a stack on the shelf. Those shells have been scoured until their inner surfaces glisten.

"Let me see your pitcher," she orders.

I infer she means that I am to hand the pitcher to her, so I do so. With the thin edge of the big shell she skims the milk in one of the pans. The cream on that milk is so thick that it moves back from the skimmer in wrinkles. Mrs. Lake has to use a spoon to push it from the shell into our pitcher.

"There!" she exclaims. "I'm afraid that's all I can let your mother have. Got to save some for myself and for Cap'n Mayo's folks; I promised to help them out today if it was so's I could. I do hope this will be enough for you."

Considering that it is all the pitcher will hold, I opine that it will be quite sufficient.

"How much?" repeats Mrs. Lake. "Oh, I don't know. Ten cents, maybe. Well, good-by. Tell your grandma and the rest of 'em I'm coming to call, soon's ever I can find time. Would you like a cookie? Here's one that's just out of the oven."

And at dinner we poured that cream over our bowls of new rye mush. No, that is wrong; we did not pour it. It was far too thick to pour, so we dipped it with a spoon. And, when stirred with the molasses in my bowl, the mixture was beautiful to look at, streaked and veined like — why, yes, like marble. The grownups, including the minister and his wife, used sugar, but I preferred molasses. Why I do not know; I am quite sure I should not prefer it now.

Ah, me! It has been many a long day since I tasted new rye mush. I wish I might taste it this minute. But how can I? Where can one find new rye on Cape Cod? (Rye meal, of course is meant. In the rum-running days, another sort of “rye” was plentiful enough.) And, provided it was found, where is the Cape windmill to grind it? Information is requested.

And, too, suppose it found and ground and cooked and set before me, would it be as delicious today as it was on that yesterday? It seems as if it would, but —

Well, you see, some thirty years ago a writer friend of ours contributed to a current magazine some sketches of life on an Iowa farm as it was when he was a boy. In one article he was, as I have been doing here, chatting about the wonderful things he used to eat on that farm. There was a particular kind of sausage — I have forgotten its name, if I ever knew it — but, at any rate, the author was certain that it was the most delicious sausage ever made or eaten anywhere. What would he give, he wrote, if he could have that sausage served to him now.

And, a month or so after this article appeared in print,

I met him and he was brimful of joy and eager anticipation.

"Just think of it!" he crowed. "They still make that kind of sausage out there and some big-hearted reader has sent me five pounds of it by express. Five whole pounds! My boy, I am going to eat myself sick."

The next time I met him I noticed that he did not mention sausage. He talked a good deal but the sausage subject was not even approached. So I did the approaching.

"How about that extra-special sausage you were going to eat yourself sick on?" I asked. "Have you tried any of that your generous friend sent you?"

He shook his head sadly. "I tried it," he confessed. "The whole family tried it — once. It was *terrible!* Awful stuff! One sample was enough — we threw the rest away. How I ever could have eaten that — that rat-poison and liked it, is beyond my understanding. But I did eat it, back there on the farm — yes, and begged for more. What in the world was the matter with me, do you suppose?"

"Are you sure this sausage sent you was the same as the old-time variety?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, it was the same; no doubt about that. The sausage hadn't changed any."

But he had changed; there was the trouble. It was the old story. And now, as I rhapsodize concerning new rye mush and new rye muffins, my regrets and longings are tempered with an uneasy doubt. Perhaps I should not like them at all now.

Why, even the old-time breakfast does not seem to appeal in retrospect as it used to appeal in reality. Fish balls and baked beans, they are all right, provided your digestion is equal to them; and salt-fish hash — ah, there is a Cape Cod dish worthy of anyone's enthusiasm! — and hot muffins and doughnuts, perhaps. Yes, they might have the old appeal, provided, as I have said, one could be certain of no distressing consequences. But fried potatoes and molasses cookies and sugar cookies and, occasionally, pie — No, thank you; I shall continue with orange juice and toast and eggs, if you don't mind. And as for the old-time country coffee!

This same friend of ours — the writer who had the disappointing experience with the sausage — used to tell of a morning at a small-town boarding-house in the South. He was down there on a newspaper assignment and he overheard a conversation between his landlady and a departing patron. Said the latter:

"Mrs. Green, ma'am, I just want to tell you how much I enjoyed my cup of coffee at your table. Your coffee, ma'am, is always delicious, but it did seem to me that the cup I had this noon was the finest even you ever made."

Mrs. Green beamed. "Well, now, Mr. Jones," she simpered modestly, "I'm awful pleased you liked it so much, but I don't know as I know of any reason why that you had this noon should be so especially good. Unless," as an afterthought, "it might be because I made a fresh potful this morning."

The windmills — the genuine, full-sized, workable

mills — of course furnished the inspiration for the production of the multitude of little, toy windmills which whirl and whir by the Cape roadsides in summer. Some twenty or more years ago, so they tell us, a surfman attached to one of the Cape Cod lifesaving stations, having spare time on his hands and being "handy with tools", decided to make some toys for his own children. Windmills attached to the end of a stick had been made for centuries, but this surfman's ambition was for something more pretentious. So his little mills were miniature replicas, so far as their exterior appearance was concerned, of the real mills which he could see upon the tops of the hills over on the mainland.

His children played with them and mounted them on posts in the front yard. The neighbors saw them and mounted others for their children. Summer visitors saw them and begged the opportunity to buy or to order. And, before long, that lifesaver retired from the service and took up toy windmill making as a business. His success bred imitators and now each town from, and including, Falmouth to Provincetown, makes and displays yards full of wooden toys. Mills, boatmen with whirling paddles, ducks with whirling wings, and, as well as the whirligigs, wooden cats and dogs and crows and gulls and ships and schooners and catboats, all sorts of weather-vanes and lawn and garden gadgets.

They are made and shipped all over the country. We have seen "Genuine Cape Cod Windmills" displayed and offered for sale in Florida and in California.

One must say just a word about the Cape weather-

vanes — not the modern ones; their variety is infinite — but those of yesterday. All with a flavor of the sea they were, or almost all. Occasionally some well-to-do old captain, building a pretentious new house or a new barn, imported from the city a metal vane in the shape of a trotting horse or a soaring eagle, but he was the exception. The great majority of Cape Cod vanes were made inside its borders and were of wood. Whales and swordfish were the favorite shapes, with here and there a cod or, rarer still, a schooner with wooden sails. In our parents' day, the number of flat wooden swordfish upon the roofs of barns in Barnstable County must have been in the hundreds. Some are still to be seen there, but they are fewer each year.

The first after-breakfast act of yesterday's Cape Codder was to stroll out into the yard, look up at the vane, and see from which direction the wind was blowing. After that, he made his prophecy concerning the weather for the day. It was an old salt-water habit, of course. The wind, its force and direction, meant much to the mariner and, after his retirement from active seafaring, it was still of important interest. It is so yet. Ask any native Caper of today how the wind is and he can tell you. So can the summer resident, after he has been a summer resident for any length of time. It is a trick we all learn.

Away, in the city or the suburbs, we never think about the wind, never pay any attention to it unless it blows a hurricane; but back again on the Cape we step out and look up at our vane. A northwest wind in summer means clear, cool and beautiful weather. A southwest breeze —

it is the prevailing summer wind — a pleasant day usually, but, sometimes, a hazy one developing into a “smoky sou’-wester.” A southeast wind is likely to bring rain with it, and a northeaster a storm. Unless, of course, we have a spell of “clear no’theastly”, in which case the weather is as fine as it is when the wind is from the northwest.

This is what our weather-vanes tell us in summer. In winter, the information differs to some extent. Then a northwest day is likely to be the coldest of all.

Some of the Cape towns, or groups of citizens in those towns, have taken pains to restore and preserve the old windmills, with gear, arms and wheels intact. These towns and groups deserve, or so I think, a sincere vote of thanks. The old windmills belong in the Cape Cod picture. I hope at least a few may always remain in it.





Wreck Ashore



IF you are a Cape Codder, either by birth or adoption, I can tell you nothing concerning its shape or the formation of its shores with which you are not already familiar. There is, I am sure, at least one map of the Cape hanging on the wall of your home or summer cottage. If you are not even a part-time resident of our section of New England, then the map of Massachusetts in your atlas or geography will serve the purpose, my purpose just now.

You know, or the map will remind you, that the Cape is a bent arm, with its clenched fist at Provincetown, its narrow wrist at Truro, its elbow at Chatham, and its sturdy shoulder at Sandwich and Bourne and Falmouth.

This is not offered as new or novel information. "The right arm of Massachusetts" has been used by orators and writers, when referring to the Cape, for so long a time that it has become a commonplace. Cape Cod is like an arm — everyone knows that — but I do want you to realize how deeply into salt water that arm is dipped. Cape Cod Bay on the north, the Atlantic Ocean on the east, Nantucket Sound and Vineyard Sound on the south, and Buzzards Bay and the canal on the west. Yes, the Cape is an island now. The Coffins and other Nantucket "first families" can no longer sneer at us as "off-Islanders." The cutting of the Cape Cod Canal ended that; we, too, are islanders — if that is anything to brag about.

And all these stretches of water are alive with traffic, big and little. The only semi-deserted section is the inner loop of the Bay from, say, Eastham to Barnstable. The tides and the shallow water keep all but the smallest craft out and away from those shores.

But the rest of it. Take, for instance, the long stretch from Cuttyhunk on through the two Sounds, around Monomoy and along the back of the Cape to Race Point. Suppose you are bluefishing on the Handkerchief Shoal, or after shark by Bishop and Clarks' light, or anchored and trying for cod by the old wreck — the fishermen call it the "wrack" — out beyond the Stone Horse. Yours may be the only small boat in that neighborhood, but you are not alone — indeed you are not.

If you are anchored by the "wrack", there are two lightships in sight. One, the Stone Horse, is but a mile or two distant; you can see the crew moving about the

deck. The other, a smudge on the horizon, marks the outer edge of the Handkerchief. And, behind you and ahead of you and passing you, are steamers and schooners and tugs with their tows of barges, going and coming. You feel that you are at the border of a sea street and a busy street, at that.

And now, if you happen to possess or can borrow a chart of these waters, I ask you to look at it. Note the shoals on that chart. The Hen and Chickens, the Cross Rip, the Handkerchief, the Stone Horse, Pollock Rip Slough, Pollock Rip — these are some of them. Lightships at the edge of practically every one, and the sands shifting and changing with the storms of each succeeding winter. And, in the vicinity of Monomoy, a savage tide to figure upon and to guard against.

A coast to be carefully navigated even in summer and in winter a wicked, dangerous coast. Even now, with the light-buoys and bell-buoys and whistling-buoys and spar-buoys, with the number of lightships much greater than it used to be, with all the advantages of electricity and weather reports and wireless telegraphy, all the modern safeguards, it is still wicked and dangerous. The Canal, furnishing, as it does, a short cut from Sandwich to Buzzards Bay, is by no means universally used by navigators. Canal tolls are expensive and owners and skippers will take chances. There are, still, wrecks along the back of the Cape, although they are few and far between compared to the number in years gone by.

The coast and channels are far better lighted than they used to be, although now there are not so many light-

houses. Fifty years ago there was a lighthouse at Race Point; Highland Light at North Truro, the powerful beacon the flashes of which might be seen above the horizon from inward-bound ships before land was sighted; Nauset "Three Lights", three small lighthouses set close together; the "Twin Lights" at Chatham; the tall tower at Monomoy Point; lighthouses at Hardings' Beach, at Bass River, at Point Gammon — this marked the entrance to the harbor of Hyannisport; at Bishop and Clarks' ledge — the "Clarks" may have been "Clerks" in the beginning; at Woods Hole and Cuttyhunk and Gay Head. And others which we have omitted.

A number of these lighthouses have been discontinued. Some, like the "Three Lights" at Nauset, are in use no longer. Chatham has but one lighthouse now, instead of two. Monomoy light shines no more; the lighthouse and the keeper's dwelling there were sold by the Government to a private citizen who uses the house as a gunning camp. The Hardings' Beach lighthouse still stands, but an iron trestle with an automatically flashing electric beacon does its work. And the lighthouses at Bass River and Point Gammon, guides to the old-time fishing fleets, are idle. Electric signals, electric channel buoys and additional lightships do their work and make navigation infinitely safer. But lovers of Cape Cod miss the old-fashioned lighthouses. A trestle with an automatic light at its tip is just as effective and very much cheaper to operate, but it is not nearly so picturesque; there is nothing romantic about it.

The little lighthouse at Wing's Neck in Buzzards Bay

has, so far as I know, been where it is for many long years and is more important now than ever. Since the Canal has been built and used, it is a guiding light for traffic entering or leaving the channel at the point. In the summer season the evening passing of the New York-bound passenger steamer through the Canal is an event. People come to Sagamore or Bourne in their motorcars, bring their picnic suppers and wait to see the boat go by. She was a pretty sight, brilliantly lighted, flags flying, the band playing and the passengers crowding her rails. Going up to watch the boat go through is a regular summer evening "stunt" in that vicinity.

The life-saving stations have not been done away with or their number lessened. On the contrary, more have been built and manned. There are now, between Provincetown and the end of Monomoy Point, thirteen stations in active service. This number is given from memory, but I am not more than one or two out of the way. Within the borders of Chatham's township limits there are four. One on the North Beach, one on the island beyond Stage Harbor, one at Monomoy Beach and one at Monomoy Point. A dangerous coast still, you see.

And now practically all the heavier and valuable cargoes are carried in steamers or towed by steam tugboats. Consider the conditions of sixty or seventy years ago or earlier, when hundreds and hundreds of sailing vessels traveled this, the main water highway to and from Southern ports, from New York and Philadelphia and New Bedford and Portland and Boston — "down East" and back again. Do you wonder that, with the exception of Cape Hatteras,

there were far more wrecks along the stretch from the Vineyard to Provincetown than on any other section of the Atlantic coast during a given period.

Please excuse all these facts and figures. They do not belong in these chapters of ours and may be found, with more figures and details, in books where they do belong. And it is not my purpose to write, in even a partially adequate manner, of the great record of Cape Cod life-saving crews since the service was established. That, too, has been well written, although a great deal more might be said — or so it seems to me.

What I have been trying to do is to convey some idea of the perils of navigation along the ocean and Sound side of the Cape, during or before our own "I remember" days.

Of course I do not remember the time when wrecking — that is, the salvage of wrecked vessels and their cargoes — was almost a business along certain shores of Cape Cod. That was all over and done with long before I "came to town", as Grandmother used to say when she mentioned my first birthday. We, of my day, have heard some stories about the wreckers, though they should be taken, as I took them, as yarns which may or may not need a sprinkle of salt.

The stories we heard dealt only with one town and with one section of that town. And they were told to us when we were boys, so my memory of them is rather vague. Cap'n Ben, that old friend of ours, told them. In his youth, the lower end of Chatham, the end which is now called "down in the village", was nicknamed "Scrab-

bletown.” Kipling, in “Captains Courageous”, has one of his Gloucester fishermen call to the crew of a Chatham schooner alongside his own: “Ye Scrabble-towners, ye Chatham wreckers! Git aout with your brick in your stockin’.”

We do not know to what the “brick in your stockin’” may have referred but, according to Cap’n Ben, “Scrabbletown” was the derisive name given by outsiders to Chatham village in the old-time yarns about wrecking as a business. There was — this is Cap’n Ben again — a group of daredevil spirits in Scrabbletown who made a living by piloting vessels over or around the shoals, by helping them off those shoals when they had grounded there, or, when they could not be floated, of salvaging, for liberal commissions, or saving and selling — or keeping — goods and chattels which they carried.

Cap’n Ben used to say that his father said the whole of Scrabbletown was in the wrecking game. Even some itinerant members of the clergy. One of Ben, Senior’s, yarns, as told to his son, dealt with a revival meeting held in one of the halls there. That evening the preacher was a local product who preached occasionally but whose worldly profession was that of a wrecker. He was in the middle of a fervent discourse when a small boy came up the aisle with a note in his hand. The preacher took the note, read it, and then requested the members of the congregation to bow their heads in silent meditation for a moment. He waited until all heads were bowed and every eye, except his own, closed. Then he tiptoed from the pulpit and darted from the building by the back door.

The note was from his partner in the wrecking business and informed him that a schooner was ashore on a shoal back of the outer beach and had set lighted signals for help. He meant to be, and was, with his partner, the first to reach the stranded vessel and make a trade with the skipper for floating her.

Another wrecking yarn of Cap'n Ben's was of the days of his own youth. He and another Chatham boy rowed across to the outer beach one dark evening, landing from their boat about a mile above "Scrabbletown" village. They had with them a long pole and a lantern. Walking down the beach until they were opposite the village, they lit the lantern and hung it on a nail at the end of the pole. Then, holding the pole by the other — the lower — end, they moved the lantern back and forth. As seen from the village, it looked like the light at the masthead of a small craft ashore on the back of the beach and rocking in the surf.

"And, if you'll believe it," concluded Cap'n Ben, "inside of fifteen minutes there was all of a dozen dories racing across the inlet and trying to beat each other to that wreck. We didn't wait for any one of 'em to land. We dropped the pole, blew out and grabbed the lantern, and made tracks for our own boat up the beach. We was at the store when the other crowd got back, but we didn't tell 'em we was the 'wreck.' No, sir-ee, we judged they wasn't appreciating jokes just then. Mad! Don't talk!"

Whatever the "village" may have been eighty or a hundred years ago, it is now a charmingly picturesque community, and to call it Scrabbletown in the hearing of its

inhabitants would be to invite trouble. And Cape Codders are no longer "wreckers", any of them. Even the "anchor-draggers" have sold or abandoned their little schooners and are otherwise employed. Anchor-dragging as a means of earning a living went out when steam took the place of sail. And yet, even as late as the early years of the present century, vessels were rigged and fitted for the work.

The anchor-dragger searched the shoals where hundreds of ships and barges and schooners had been wrecked and sunk. With his dredges and grapples he raised from the bottom all sorts of marine ironwork, anchors in particular. A pair of heavy anchors which had been submerged for a year or two were in good condition still and could be sold. So could a ship's bell and her brasswork and chains and wire cables. The anchor-dragger was a sort of nautical junkman and he was prepared to chance the risks of his profession for a profit. Also he was often in a position to help float a stranded vessel or help in the salvaging of her cargo, and made not a little in that way. It was Elmer Mayo, the anchor-dragger, who was the hero — or one of the heroes — of the Shovelful Shoal disaster of March, 1902. Mayo's little schooner was the *Gleaner*, a delightfully appropriate name, by the way.

The tale of that tragedy and of the heroism connected with it has been told so often, and so well, that I shall not repeat it here. Henry C. Kittredge, in his book, "Cape Cod, Its People and Their History", tells it in the chapter, "Storms, Wrecks and Wreckers", and no Cape Codd-der can read the account without a thrill of pride. The

monument near the lighthouse in Chatham village commemorates the event and records the names of the owner and crew of the coal barge, *Wadena*, as well as those of the keeper and all but one of the crew of the Monomoy life-saving station, whose lives were lost that day. Seth Ellis, the sole survivor, was afterward made keeper of the station, and Elmer Mayo, the anchor-dragger who, in a twelve-and-a-half foot dory and with a pair of heavy pilot-boat oars clumsily unfit for the purpose, rowed through a howling blizzard to the side of the overturned lifeboat and brought Ellis to shore and safety, was given a medal by the United States Government and another by the Humane Society.

If you have not read that story, you should do so. You will find it well worth your while.

The keepers and men of the Cape life-saving stations are now enlisted in the United States Coast Guard, but they were formerly under the direction of the Treasury Department. The life-saver of today has no easy time during the winter months. He must patrol the long stretch of beach night or day, in all sorts of weather, and facing snow, rain, sleet, hail, and winds which are strong enough to make every forward step a battle. Then there is the blown sand, buffeting and blinding. It is hard, unless one has actually fought against it under such conditions, to realize the cutting force of that gale-driven sand. Once, on a visit to one of the stations, I noticed that the windowpanes on the north, northeast and northwest sides of the building were opaque — they appeared to be made of ground glass. The keeper explained. "Oh, the sand did

that," he said. "They were clear as the rest of 'em when they were put in, but after a couple of winters the sand driving against 'em has ground 'em same as you see. That sand *blows!*"

No, the coast guardman's lot is not always a happy one, but, so far as the calls to wrecks are concerned, it is a sinecure compared to that of the life-saver in the years of sailing craft. From November to April *he* was a busy man.

Wrecks, and stories of wrecks, are a part of all Cape Codders' boyhood recollections. In our own town on the North Shore there was no life-saving station; we lived at the inner loop of Cape Cod Bay and no sea traffic came near that shore. But when we visited the other side, the ocean side, it was different. There were wrecks there and plenty of them. I remember visiting there shortly after a ship from Manila had come ashore back of the outer beach. Her officers and crew were, as I remember, saved, but the vessel itself went to pieces in the breakers and her cargo — she was loaded with hemp — was washed up on the outer beach for miles. The townspeople, many of them, still true to the wrecking tradition, had picked up and carted away that hemp, and now it was hanging to dry in great festoons upon the fences along the main road. A curious sight.

"Looks as if all the tow-headed girls from all the theater shows in creation had come down to get a haircut," said an old longshoreman.

Some years ago I was writing a novel dealing with the life-saving group and visited this South Shore town to



A WRECK OFF MONOMOY

renew my acquaintance with life-savers of the days gone by. The first one for whom I inquired was the retired keeper of one of the local stations. The resident of whom I asked my question sadly shook his head.

"You are just a little too late," he told me. "Cap'n Ezra isn't here any more."

"Dear me!" I said. I knew that Captain Ezra was a very old man, but he had seemed hale and hearty when I last saw him, which was the previous summer.

"Dear me! So the old man is dead. Too bad, too bad!" There was a twinkle in my informant's eye.

"I didn't say he was dead," he replied. "I said he wasn't here. Dead, nothin'! He's just got married again and gone to Florida on his honeymoon."

Fifty years of risk and strenuous adventure had not killed the gambling spirit in this old Cape Codder's soul, apparently. He was willing to take still another chance.

So I could not interview him during my visit, but I had talked with him before and remember some of the yarns he told of his experiences in the service. His station was always a busy one. He told of wreck after wreck, of rescue after rescue. Of ships and schooners stranded on the outer shoals or driven in almost to the beach, near enough for those aboard to be brought ashore in the "breeches buoy", an apparatus shaped like a mammoth pair of trousers. In using the breeches buoy, a light line is shot from a cannon made for the purpose and the line falls across the deck or catches in the rigging of the wrecked vessel. To it is attached a small board, upon which is printed in English and several foreign languages direc-

tions for the buoy's use. The men aboard the stranded craft are instructed to make fast and haul in the light line, to the end of which is attached another, and heavier one. Finally, the double cable upon which the buoy runs back and forth on a block is brought aboard and secured.

Then one of the vessel's crew thrusts his legs into the legs of the breeches buoy and, clinging to the ropes attached to the block, is drawn to shore by the life-savers. The weight of the passenger, of course, causes the cable to sag and the trip is made partially above the ravenous breakers and partially through them. As soon as one man is drawn to safety, the buoy is sent back for another.

My friend told of a rescue where the captain's wife, a middle-aged woman, was the first passenger in the breeches buoy. She was "clear grit", he said, and refused to be carried to the warmth and comfort of the station until she had seen her husband, the last to leave his ship, dragged in to safety.

He told of many other wrecks, one where the crew — what was left of them — were lashed and freezing in the rigging and, although the buoy line fell exactly as it should, the poor fellows were too far gone from cold and exhaustion to grasp or secure it. Attempt after attempt was made to reach the vessel, but she was on the very core of the shoal, where the sea was a mass of frothing fury, and when the lifeboat was finally launched, after at least a dozen capsizings in the surf, to get near enough to board was an impossibility. The life-savers kept at it, however, but, while they were still trying, the masts

crashed down and over the side, carrying the ship's men with them. All hands were lost.

I asked him what was the very worst experience of his fifty years. It was some time before he answered. Then he told this story.

She was a little two-masted schooner, bound west from "down-East", with a load of building sand. They sighted her from the station tower early on a February morning. A heavy sea, the aftermath of a three-day gale, was running and the thermometer was, and had been for twenty-four hours, close to or below the zero mark. The schooner was, when sighted, about five miles out from the beach. She was drifting slowly and they judged that an attempt had been made by those aboard her to anchor, and that the anchors were not holding. She was flying distress signals.

Captain Ezra, keeper of the station — Ezra was not his Christian name, but it will do well enough — realized what was before him and, before ordering out his men, sat down at his desk in the keeper's room and drafted and signed his will, a brief memorandum assigning his little property to his wife in case of his death.

"And I tell you," he said, "I expected to die before that day was over, full as much as I'm expecting to light this cigar this minute. It wasn't the sea nor the wind I was afraid of — I'd faced worse than them many a time. It was the cold I cal'lated would finish us. And it pretty nigh did."

A foretaste of that cold came to the men as they came out of the station. They were muffled to the eyes, with oil-

skins and sou'westers as the upper layer, but that wind-driven cold pierced through to the skin and then to the bones. The lifeboat was ready on the cart, the horses were harnessed and attached, and they moved down the slope of the beach. Captain Ezra gave the orders for launching.

"Man the surf boat."

The men stepped to their positions. The cart was turned broadside to the thundering breakers.

"Unload. . . . Take out bolts."

The forward and rear wheels of the boat carriage separated.

"Set."

The life boat slid to the sand.

"Haul out wheels."

The wheels were pushed aside. The men with the lifting bar skidded the boat's bow around until it faced the sea.

"Take life belts."

The belts were in the racks at the sides of the boat and each man strapped on and adjusted his.

"Ship rowlocks. . . . Take oars."

The oars were laid crosswise on the boat and the rowlocks set in place. The men stood, each in his accustomed position.

"Shove her down."

The boat slid into the foam.

"In bow."

The two surfmen at the bow sprang in and took their oars.

"Down with her."

As she moved out, the other men swung over the gunwale.

“Start rowing. . . . Go.”

And out she went. Out and up, as the first great wave lifted her. The water, so cold that the drops stung where they hit, poured over the bow. Captain Ezra wrestled with the steering oar and they climbed the next breaker. There was nothing out of the ordinary in this procedure, they had been through it often before, but the cold of that morning was far from ordinary.

The members of that crew, those still living, will talk of that row even yet. The seas were tremendous, but they were used to big seas. The spray drenched them, but they were used to that. It was the cold that made that five-mile row a torture. Wherever the water fell, it froze. Long before they reached the schooner, they were encased in ice. The water streamed down their faces and their eyelashes and mustaches were hung with icicles. Their mittens became armored gauntlets. The boat's bow was a miniature berg. And still they rowed on and on.

After a while Jones ordered the sail set with three reefs, but the wind was of gale strength and the seas were so high that when the boat sank into the hollows between them, the ice-stiffened canvas was more a hindrance than a help, so they soon dropped it and fought on with the oars alone. A “white ash breeze” was better just then than the regular kind, so Captain Ezra told me.

At last — and a long last it was — they reached the wallowing schooner. Heavily loaded with sand, her rails were close to the water's edge and every other wave broke over

her. She was buried in glistening ice; woodwork, shrouds, gear, deckhouse, — all were covered with it. One anchor, its chains coated inches deep with ice, dragged astern; the other, which had been put over during the night, had broken away and was gone.

There were six men aboard her, but only two, the skipper and a foremast hand, were on deck, and even they were scarcely able to crawl. The other four were below, frost-bitten and helpless. The galley fire was out and the water in the kettle on the stove frozen. The skipper was for abandoning his vessel immediately. Get him and his shipmates to dry land and lose no time about it, that was his entreaty. Never mind the schooner; they had had enough of her.

But Captain Ezra and his life-saving crew had no such intention. Look out for the men first, of course, but do not give up the ship unless, or until, surrender became absolutely necessary; that was their feeling in the matter. Half frozen and exhausted as they, themselves, were, they set to work. Investigation disclosed that the galley stove was broken and held together by ropes and a board; there was no coal and but a half pint of kerosene. The food supply consisted of four potatoes. There was coffee, however, and by chopping up various bits of the cabin furnishings, they managed to get a fire started and water heated.

After that came hours and hours of strenuous labor. The skipper and seamen were put to bed in the wretched cubbyholes which served as berths. Quart after quart of scalding coffee was made and absorbed by them and their

rescuers. The ice was hacked from the ropes and gear; the sails, which were down on deck, were chopped clear of ice. The anchor, fortunately, seemed to be holding and the gale abating, if only a little.

All that day and during the night which followed the little craft rode at anchor, leaping and dropping and rolling and pitching. How she held together was, so Captain Ezra declared, a miracle to him; she must have been staunchly built, although the year of her building was some time in the forgotten past. The skipper and his crew slept, but there was no sleep for the station men. They had to keep awake; the galley fire must be kept roaring, for the cold was as severe as ever. So all night long they stood watch and watch, those on deck stamping about to keep the blood from congealing and those below chopping berthboards and benches and partitions into firewood. The supply of coffee was soon exhausted, so they drank hot water. They ate the four potatoes and, after that, they ate nothing.

And, about ten o'clock next morning, a revenue cutter hove in sight, was hailed, came alongside and, after an hour's struggle, during which the towing cable parted twice, eventually made fast and towed them miles and miles to safety. Not a life was lost and the schooner was still afloat. Captain Ezra and his crew turned in and slept. The following day, warmed and fed and rested, they boarded their own boat and sailed her back to the station.

I asked Captain Ezra if he tore up the will he had made.

"No," he said. "I hung on to it. Might as well. I figured it was liable to come in handy 'most any day."

All this is but an abridgment of his story as I wrote it in the novel I was then at work upon. I have here omitted many of the details.

During that visit I called upon Captain Kelly, retired keeper of the Monomoy Point station. His was a record to be proud of. During his long term of service in command of that, the most active station on the New England coast, he and his crew never once failed to go to the rescue of a vessel in distress. On several occasions the commanders of other stations refused to launch their boats under the weather conditions then prevailing, and Captain Kelly responded to calls which were rightly theirs. He has in his possession a personal letter of thanks for and appreciation of his courage and skill from the Secretary of the Treasury. He deserved that—and much more than that, I think—but he appears to be perfectly satisfied. "It was what I was there for, wasn't it?" he asks. "It was what they paid me for."

At that time the keeper of a life-saving station was paid about seventy-five dollars a month, with his food provided at the Government's expense. And a member of his crew received about sixty dollars a month and provided his own food.

I might go on, and I should like to go on, with story after story of the work of the Cape Cod life-saving service during those days of sailing craft. There is enough to write about, goodness knows, enough to fill a book much longer than this one, with every page a record of coolness

and courage and capability, of devotion to duty and of an *esprit de corps* rarely equalled. Some time, perhaps, such a book may be written. I hope it may, but it should be done soon, before the survivors of the old service are beyond the reach of the interviewers.

The Cape coast is lashed by storms and its constantly changing shore line bears witness to their severity and the strength of tide and sea and wind. When, each spring, the cottager returns, he finds the stretch of beach no longer just as it was when he last saw it, the previous fall. Shoals have shifted, lightships are in different places; the beach which sloped gradually to the water's edge is now a precipitous bank, with the surf breaking at its foot; the flat which was bare at low tide is no longer visible and there is a new one a half mile to the west. The channel through which he sailed his boat is closed and he must travel a much longer and more roundabout way to get to the buoy marking the harbor entrance. Along the North Shore those changes are inconsiderable, but from Monomoy to Race Point they are, each year, surprising.

For example: A summer cottage was built in Chatham in 1916. At that time the outer beach — the long stretch of sand, sparsely covered with coarse grass and wild growth, extending south from Orleans and separating the inlet leading from Pleasant Bay and Meeting House River to the ocean — ended just opposite this cottage. From his veranda the owner's view took in the wide reaches of the inlet reaching away to the north and, in front and to the south, the open sea. Now, in 1935, the sea view in front is

cut off by a new stretch of beach, which has been added to the original beach by the wind and tide. That is, during the eighteen years since the cottage has been built, the winter storms and tides have built new land, more than a mile and a half in length and with an average width of a quarter of a mile.

In the early years of the nineteenth century, the Old Harbor at Chatham was a very real harbor. Wharves and warehouses stood on its borders and good-sized vessels sailed in to load and unload there. The harbor entrance was almost opposite what is now "Minister's Point." Nowadays most of the Old Harbor is bare at low tide, and the outer beach, where the entrance used to be, is a sand barrier a good half mile wide.

The old maps show Monomoy Beach as an island. The "cut through" which made it an island and afforded the fishing schooners quick and easy entrance to Stage Harbor, is now as solid and substantial as any other part of that long beach. In the summer months broad-tired motor-cars carry sightseers and picnic parties from the town to the Point and return daily.

In the middle 70's a succession of severe storms washed away the sand below the Chatham lighthouses and laid bare what must have been, in the early Colonial days, a swampy meadow grown over with good-sized trees. The portion of this meadow then uncovered extended out from shore a long distance. Not even the oldest inhabitant could remember when that section had been anything except sand dunes and sand flats. There was no tradition of its ever having been anything else.

And yet, that spring the author, a little boy accompanied by "grownups", walked over that uncovered meadow and saw there the stumps of the big trees and, in the black clay soil, tracks of a wagon with tires wider than any which had been used for a century and a half. The marks of the horses' hooves were there, the footprints of men, and, in one place, the trail of a deer. The wheel marks and the tracks were deeply printed in the clay and had filled with sand, so that they stood out as plainly as if painted in yellow on the dark background.

All that summer they were visible, but during the following winter they were again buried. And now, over that spot where we walked, there is twenty feet of water even at low tide.

All these changes, and I have noted but a few of them, were made during the winter months. It is the winter storms which begin the changing and shifting, and the surging tides which carry on the work. If you have sailed or motorboated about the elbow of the Cape, you know the force of those tides. Unless you have experienced a really bad February no'theaster on that coast, you can scarcely imagine what it is like.

One of the memorable Cape Cod storms was that of November, 1898. It began to blow during the afternoon and at nightfall was increasing in force. A relative of ours—the "Cousin Edgar" who went bluefishing with us in the "Heave and Haul" chapter—occupied a good-sized house fronting the Chatham main road at the center of the town. Next to the house and on his property was another building which he used for business purposes.

About the house and along the sidewalk before the house and store were tall trees, elms and silverleaf poplars, with an occasional spruce or fir. There were chimneys on the house and one on the store building.

The family retired about ten that evening, but the gale did not permit their sleeping, so, after a little, they dressed and came down to the sitting-room. All living-rooms were sitting-rooms at that time; there was, of course, a best parlor, but that was opened only on Sundays and to live in it every day would have been profanation.

The storm had been terrific when they went upstairs; now it was far worse and it continued to gain in force and fury throughout the greater part of the night. Farther up the Cape and in Boston and vicinity it was a blizzard which halted all traffic and buried the land under huge drifts of snow. Down on Cape Cod there was no snow, but there was a rainfall which threatened all existing records and a hurricane which established one of its own.

The solidly built house shook from roof to ground floor. The sheets of water were hurled against the windowpanes until it seemed as if the latter might be dashed in pieces at any moment. At the front of the house, connecting the parlor with the almost never used front door, was a narrow hall perhaps six feet long. That gale-driven rain was beaten under the heavy door, soaked the hall rug from end to end, crept under the inner door and wet the parlor carpet in a circle of several feet.

At midnight, or thereabouts, the great elm by the edge of the front walk went down. A few minutes later the chimney on the kitchen ell fell with a thunderous boom.

Then the fir by the side of the house crashed, scraping and rattling against the clapboards. Then the chimney on the store building fell and, a little later, that on the main body of the house, directly over the heads of the frightened group in the sitting-room. No more fires in the stove, of course, and consequently no heat. Wrapped in coats and cloaks and blankets, the family shivered till morning came.

At daybreak it was still raining but the force of the wind had abated. The Chatham main road was a sight to see. I have been shown photographs of that road on that day and they are a unique exhibit. Trees down everywhere, beside the road, across it, leaning against roofs, filling porches with tangled debris of broken branches. Scarcely a chimney standing whole and unwrecked. The town masons were busy day and night for a fortnight.

The fences were the most curious sight of all. Practically every front yard of that period was edged with a fence, of the picket variety, for the most part. The roots of the shade trees extended under those fences, and when the gale felled the trees, it tore their roots from the earth, lifting and twisting the fences in great arcs and bows. That road, in the photograph, looks as if it were bordered with writhing boa constrictors.

Of course, after a night like that and after ascertaining the amount of damage done to his own and his neighbor's property, the Cape Codder's first thought was of the men upon the sea. There must have been wrecks, many of them, but how many lives had been lost? There

were no newspapers — there was to be none for several days — so he could only question and hope and wait.

He did not have to wait long. Before noon there was a rumor that wreckage from some good-sized vessel, apparently a passenger steamer, was coming ashore along the outer beach. Then, next day, came the report that an overturned boat had been found beating to pieces in the breakers. And on that boat's stern was the name *Portland*.

The *Portland* was a side-wheel steamer plying between Boston and the Maine capital. She had left her wharf at Boston at her regular time. Captains of other steamers had decided not to take the risk, but the *Portland's* commander thought he saw signs of the storm's letting up and had gone out. It was shortly after Thanksgiving and Maine people were returning home after the holiday, so aboard her — officers, crew, employees and passengers — were in the neighborhood of one hundred and eighty men, women and children.

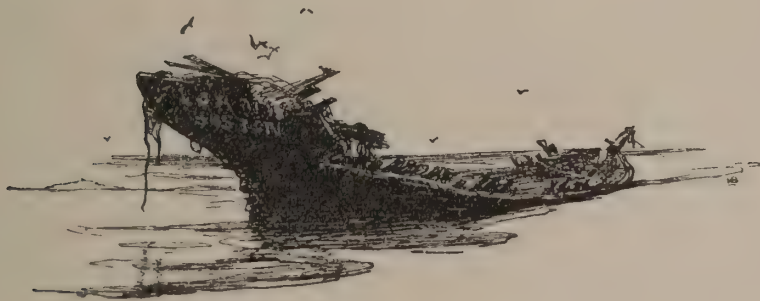
And of that hundred and eighty not one was ever seen alive again. To this day, no one knows when or why or exactly where the *Portland* met her end. Her wreckage was strewn along the Cape's South Shore from Provincetown to Monomoy. Those were sad days in the towns bordering that shore. Bodies came ashore, many of them. Friends and relatives came to identify and care for those bodies. The carts, loaded with coffins, moved from the beaches to the railway stations. It was a season of stark tragedy, with many pitiful incidents and strange heart-rending coincidences and happenings.

On board the *Portland* that night was a young, newly

married couple of our acquaintance. The husband was manager of the Portland branch of a large wholesale house. He and his wife had come up to a Boston suburb to spend Thanksgiving Day with her parents there. They were returning after a happy holiday. For weeks the grief-stricken relatives remained in Chatham, hoping that the bodies of their dear ones might be recovered, as were others daily. But they never were. And yet, oddly enough, the young wife's trunk, with all her bridal finery, was washed ashore at Orleans.

I hate to end this chapter upon such a mournful note, but there is little to joke about when the cry of "Wreck Ashore" is heard along our wave-beaten shores. The stories of the life-saving service are, very few of them, humorous. If there is a happy note anywhere, it is the fact that the number of lives lost along the Cape Cod beaches grows smaller year by year and the number of serious marine disasters fewer.

And if you must have your smile, try and find it in the pay of those life-savers back in the years when they were busiest. Sixty dollars a month and provide one's own food. You may not think that at all funny, but I have often heard the life-saver himself laugh at it.





Characters and Yarns



FIVE or six years ago a press-clipping bureau sent the writer an article printed in a Midwestern newspaper. In that article a correspondent of that paper described a vacation which he had recently spent on Cape Cod. He had had a good time there, so he wrote, but, in one respect at least, he had come away disappointed. And I—the author of these “Yesterday” sketches—was responsible for his disappointment. He had read some novels and stories by me and he had come to the Cape expecting to find it inhabited solely by a people who were, to put it mildly, odd and peculiar in speech and manner and habit of life. For two weeks he

wandered up and down the main streets of one of the Cape towns, looking for such people. He went into shops catering to summer visitors; he loitered along the beaches thronged with bathers; at his hotel he chatted with a landlord whose business it was to cater to individuals like him. And, in finding what he was after, he had no luck at all.

So he spoke to the landlord about it.

"Where," he asked, "can I find 'characters' such as he —" meaning me — "writes about in his books?"

And the landlord replied.

"You can find them *in* those books. That's the only place I know of."

In other words, there are and never were my "characters" on Cape Cod and those in the books are inventions of the authors.

Well, as a Cape Cod author, I am not going to plead guilty to that indictment. It is perfectly true that the majority of the Cape's all-the-year inhabitants use as good English, are as accustomed to the ways of the world and are no more eccentric and peculiar than those of any other rural section of the United States. Being a Cape Codder by birth, and having spent a large portion of my life in Barnstable County, I know this to be a fact and am proud to acknowledge it.

But it is also a fact that there were and still are "characters" on Cape Cod. Not as many now, doubtless, as in the packet and stagecoach time, before the roads were paved and when the cities were so much less easy of access. Before the entertaining of the urban visitor was so

much a part of the Caper's business. Before the days of telephones and electric lights and radios and modern conveniences of all sorts. In those earlier periods the towns were more isolated and self-centered; life was simpler and idiosyncrasies and odd habits of life and speech were less checked or restrained by example. And, too, those peculiarities and their possessors were better advertised than at present; the doings of the great outside world were not so much discussed at our breakfast and supper tables, and those of our fellow townsmen and women were.

Were there more of those so-called characters on the Cape than in other sections of our country of like area at that time? Probably not. Judging by tales of the early settlers, there were as many odd people in — say, an Indiana country town, as in any New England community. Does any oldster remember reading Eggleston's "Hoosier Schoolmaster" or "The End of the World"? Surely, if his pictures were true ones, the people out there, many of them, were queer and peculiar enough. No doubt there were others, and they in the majority, who were not at all peculiar, but Mr. Eggleston wrote of the queer ones because he — and his readers — found them more interesting. An original is always more interesting than a copy, although the copy may have a higher polish.

After all, what is a "character", anyway?

Why, he or she is, apparently, an individual who speaks and acts and, perhaps, thinks in a manner different from that in which you, yourself, speak and act and think. And it is just possible that he, because of that difference, may

consider you a character; he has that privilege, of course. There is an old story which illustrates that point. It is a very old story. I have told it hundreds of times and, no doubt, thousands of others have told it. With apologies, therefore, for its age, here it is:

Down on the Cape, so the tale goes, there used to be a stage line from the railway station in a town to a beach resort a few miles distant. On one occasion the driver of this stage had as a passenger a young fellow who was returning to the city after a two-weeks' stay at the resort.

"Uncle," said this young chap, "I'll say this for you. You certainly have some queer characters here on Cape Cod."

The driver nodded. "Um-hm," he agreed gravely. "This is the season for 'em; they come on about every train now."

It depends on the point of view, doesn't it? And there is another point to be considered. A "character" may not be a character at all in his own environment and become one when he steps outside of it. For example:

An old newspaper acquaintance of mine visited the Klondike during the "gold rush" of years ago. Being a tenderfoot, he considered it his duty to dress the part of a seasoned prospector and also to be prepared for eventualities. So, after arraying himself in high boots, a blue flannel shirt and a slouch hat, he girded his waist with a belt supporting a pair of holstered revolvers of impressive size. One afternoon he stopped at a shack in the hills and, when the door was opened in answer to his knock, he found himself facing a dignified person whose

appearance was familiar and whose identity he recognized after a moment's scrutiny.

Tall, lean, with long gray hair curling, in Buffalo Bill fashion, over his collar, keen gray eyes under overhanging brows. Why, of course! This was José Wheeler, the famed "Poet of the Rockies." They had met before in quite different surroundings.

But, although he recognized Mr. Wheeler, the latter did not recognize him. And the Wheeler greeting was anything but cordial.

"Ugh!" grunted the great man. "Here's another of them! Guns and all! Ready to shoot the first hostile red-skin you see, eh? And not more than five miles from town at that. Bah! Go back East and take your arsenal with you. You and it don't belong here."

Now our newspaper friend had a temper of his own and the soft answer which turneth away wrath was not his accustomed utterance when addressed in this manner. He looked the speaker over.

"Mr. Wheeler," he said, "the last time I saw you, you were strolling down Broadway, wearing fringed buckskin leggings and shirt, with a ten-gallon hat on your head and your hair hanging to the shoulders, the way it does now. And when people turned to look and whispered, you probably thought they were saying, 'That is José Wheeler, the Poet of the Rockies.' They were not; they were saying, 'Who on earth is that damned fool?'"

Wheeler stared. "Come in," he ordered. So my friend entered the cabin, stayed there for supper and over night, and he and the poet parted amicably after breakfast next

morning. They understood each other better by that time.

Yes, it all depends — on the point of view and environment and custom and — ever so many things. And here is as good a place as any to remind that Midwestern critic that to find native “characters”, on Cape Cod or anywhere else, one should not search for them in neighborhoods almost exclusively frequented by visitors. The only kind of native “character” likely to be there is the kind who is a character for revenue only; there are a few of that sort.

In our boyhood there were “characters”, who were recognized as such by everyone, and talked about from one end of the Cape to the other. “Stephen Peter” was one of these. His full name was, as I remember, Stephen Peter Cahoon, but no one ever called him anything but “Stephen Peter”, or “Tephen Peter”, for he had an impediment in his speech and could not pronounce the letter S. Stephen Peter hailed from somewhere in East Harwich and was a half-breed or a quarter-breed — some mixture of white and Indian and Portuguese mulatto. He went fishing to the Banks and every old-time Banks fisherman will tell you stories about him. Most of these stories are unprintable and many, of course, have little or no foundation in truth. Stephen Peter was, apparently, the butt of the fishing fleets. Kipling, in “Captains Courageous”, has one of his characters spin a “Tephen Peter” yarn.

According to this story, and I have heard it, with variations, from at least twenty different sources, Stephen Peter

had a sister, a not brilliant nor too prepossessing young woman, who married while her brother was away on a Banks cruise. A schooner's crew, arriving from home, spread the news throughout the fleet and some joker informed "Tephen" that she had made a fine match and that her husband was wealthy. Stephen bragged and swaggered until he reached home, where he was sadly disillusioned. The man his sister had married was a mental deficient and a pauper.

"Huh!" lisped Stephen. "One half on the town and the other half darned fool, and they told me she married a rich man. Huh!"

Stephen, so they say, shipped one summer under a Captain Baker. When the schooner lay at the wharf in the harbor at Harwichport, Stephen approached his skipper and demanded an advance of seventeen dollars on his wage and share. Asked for what reason he desired the money his reply was:

"Want to buy two plug chaw-tobacco, quarter pound salerato, quarter pound cream o'tarto, and hire white horse-'n-buggy, ride to Brewster with."

The captain shook his head. "Too much money," he said. "Afraid you can't have it, Stephen."

Stephen's clenched fists were shaken above his head.

"Valentine Baker," he screamed, "by gar mighty, I no go in yo' boat no more! You cheata me, you cheata me!"

Not very brilliant yarns these, not even funny, but they are samples of the scores of Stephen Peter tales which the fishermen of the '70's and '80's used to tell. If Cape "char-

acters" are to be mentioned at all, 'Tephen Peter Cahoon must not be omitted from the list.

Then there was "Old Beauregard." Beauregard was not his name, but "Old Beauregard" was what he was invariably called. *He* was an eccentric, a "character" if there ever was one. He lived in an old, tumble-down shingle house in the woods near South Brewster, but he roved from Falmouth to Provincetown. Sometimes he drove an old roan mare attached to a blue truck-wagon, the spokes of the latter ornamented with festoons of red, white and blue ribbons. In the forepart of the cart was an ancient upholstered armchair, the cotton stuffing leaking out in various places, and in the chair sat "Old Beauregard", a battered silk hat on his head, reins in one hand and whip in the other; the whip, too, was festooned with the national colors.

On other occasions we have seen him meandering placidly along, enthroned in an old chaise, between the shafts of which was, not the roan mare, but an ox. The chaise — heaven only knows where he obtained it — was a relic of someone's long-departed grandeur, and the ox was the result of a trade involving the old mare, a second-hand — or third-hand — stove and a dollar or so as "boot."

"Safe, that's what I cal'late to be," explained Old Beauregard grandly. "Gittin' older and I can't take no risks. An ox won't run away with ye."

During an exceptionally cold snap one winter, one of his toes was frozen and he amputated it himself with a hatchet.

"Bible," he proclaimed. "Jest Bible, that's all. What

does the Scriptur' tell us? 'If your right eye offend ye pluck it out?' Says that, don't it? Yus — yus. Well, that toe offended me and I got rid of it. Take my orders from Holy writ, I do. Yus, indeed!"

And Barney Gould. There must be hundreds who remember Barney. A curious specimen with, as they used to say, a shingle or two lacking in his upper story. Barney was the self-appointed errand boy and expressman of the Cape. For a dime or fifteen cents he would undertake to deliver a fair-sized package to a destination five miles distant. He started at a dogtrot and, so far as I have ever heard, finished at the same pace. He scorned the highways and did his running on the railroad track.

"Why don't you take the train, Barney?" someone asked him.

"Don't bother me. Can't stop for no train," vowed Barney, galloping off.

And the neighborhood poets. Every, or almost every, Cape town had its "poet", I am sure. I was acquainted with several of the genus. One, in particular, I knew when I was ten or twelve. He broke into poetry whenever any event of especial moment took place in his neighborhood and, if sufficiently flattered and coaxed, would recite his lyric gems for the benefit of listeners, young or old.

There was the poem extolling the charms of one of the young women of the village. I wish I could remember the whole of it; here are the first two lines.

She is pretty and she is fair
As any girl you'll find *anywhere*.

But the ode celebrating the completion of the Chatham Branch Railroad was, I think, his *chef-d'oeuvre*. Here are three stanzas:

In Chatham town, I'd have you to know,
The cars come down a short time ago.

When the folks the whistle hear
They come 'round from fur and near.

All you that are sore and tried
Git in the cars and have a ride.

The lines, of course, lose something when transferred to cold type. To get their full flavor, one should have heard them declaimed by their author. "Tried" was then "troied" and "ride" was "roide" and there was a slurred haste in the "fur-'n'-near" that cannot be imitated in print.

Down at Centre Cove there lived, about twenty years ago, a hermit. Of course he did not call himself a hermit but the summer visitors used to call him that behind his back. He was not a religious recluse, far from it, but he did live alone in an unfrequented spot and that, probably, is as near to being a genuine hermit as one is likely to get on the Cape.

I am not, for obvious reasons, going to tell you exactly where Centre Cove is. That is not its real name, but every summer boat-owner and every party-boat skipper and fisherman in that section knows it. When they are out bluefishing or coddling or tending the deep-water weirs, they see it in the distance, a tiny cluster of shanties against a low background of yellow sand and green

beach grass. There is a life-saving station within two miles of it and that station is inhabited most of the year, whereas now — and it was the same twenty years ago — all but one of the shanties are not occupied at all, or, when they are, it is at infrequent intervals and for a few days at a time. The nearest town is six long miles away by land and about the same by water.

In one, and that perhaps the smallest, shanty at Centre Cove lived Caleb Pound — which was not *his* real name, either. And Caleb lived in that shanty from one year's end to the other, leaving it only semi-occasionally, when he went up to town to buy a few groceries or to sell clams and scallops. When I knew him he had been living there a long time, although the reasons for his settling there at all no one seemed to know.

He had been a lively fellow in his youth. He played the violin and, so the older people told us, used to fiddle at the old-fashioned country dances in the village. When he abandoned his social gaieties and removed to his hermitage at Centre Cove, he brought his fiddle with him. He kept it and the bow wrapped in an old sweater to protect them from the dampness.

Once a year a small group of us used to sail down to Centre Cove for a two-days' picnic and outing. It was the same group who went on our bluefishing excursions. Cap'n Ben skippered the party and his daughter and Cousin Edgar and his daughter were along, of course. A friend of ours had put his gunning shanty at our disposal and we occupied it for the two days and one night. There were two good-sized sleeping-rooms fitted with

berths with straw mattresses, and the feminine members of the party slept in one of these rooms and the males in the other. We dug our own clams, caught our own fish, cooked our own chowders and had a grand time generally.

But for the evening of our stay there was always one set programme. Cap'n Ben had known Caleb Pound all his life and, at some time during the afternoon, he always walked through the quarter of a mile of sand between our shanty and that occupied by the "hermit" and invited Caleb to drop in on us after supper and to be sure and bring his fiddle.

Caleb invariably demurred at first. He didn't know's he had the fittin' kind of clothes to wear amongst women-folks. His coat was all right, but he was troubled by a lack of shoes. He was accustomed to go barefoot from May until October and his trousers were always rolled up to the knees. Consequently, his legs were tanned to the color of a finely finished mahogany piano, gloss and all.

"I've got a good pair of shoes," he explained, "but I left 'em up to the village last time I was there."

Cap'n Ben assured him that it was not his shoes we were eager to have with us that evening. "Come along just as you are," he urged.

But, no, Caleb would not do that. "I *have* got some shoes here," he went on, "but they ain't got no strings and I cut the toes out of 'em so's they'd be more comfortable."

"Just the thing," declared Cap'n Ben. "Wear those, of course."

So, about half-past seven, Mr. Pound made his appearance. And it *was* an appearance. He was wearing the toeless and laceless shoes, and, as he wore no socks, his own battered toes protruded into space. His trousers were still rolled "halfmast", as Cap'n Ben described it, and he wore an old black cotton shirt, without a tie and open at the neck. Black, as he told Cap'n Ben, was handier, 'cause a fellow don't have to wash it so often.

But it was his coat which furnished the real touch of elegance. That coat was a black, Clay diagonal "cutaway", a morning coat, if you like. Its edges were braided, its buttons were cloth-covered, and there was a colored cotton handkerchief carefully arranged to drape from the breast pocket. It was, of course, a left-over from the days, or nights, when he fiddled at the Thanksgiving or Fourth of July ball, and that he was mightily proud of it was obvious. He expected it to create a sensation and it always did. Worn with the rest of his get-up it was, to say the least, unexpected. On his head was a shapeless, faded blue yachting cap.

His fiddle, wrapped in the sweater, was under his arm. Welcomed cordially, asked to come in and to take a chair, he did so, placing the sweater and its contents carefully on the floor beside him. Cousin Edgar gave him a cigar, we offered him a light, the girls inquired about his health during the past winter and, after a little, he was at ease. Then we begged him to play for us.

I have a photograph, a snapshot, of him somewhere about the house, and I sometimes look at it, but, really, it does not do him justice. A moving picture — there were

no movie cameras for amateur use in those days — would be much better. The violin tucked under his leathery old chin, the bow scraping back and forth, one knee thrown across the other and the toeless shoe beating time, the twinkle in his pale blue eyes, the wrinkles at their corners, the half-diffident smile under his grizzled mustache — I can see them all plainly and I only wish you could. Caleb was enjoying himself and so were his hearers.

He could — and did, on request — play almost any *old* dance tune. “Money Musk”, “Turkey in the Straw”, “Smash the Windows”, “Hull’s Victory”, — he knew and played them all. Anything of recent vintage, however, was beyond him. His musical education had stopped when what he called the “contrary” dances went out of fashion. A queer, eccentric, simple fellow, but kindly and obliging and eager to please. We liked him and, we hope, he liked us.

Some of his remarks were interesting and illuminating. Cap’n Ben asked him how much it cost him to live a year there at Centre Cove. He rubbed his chin.

“In cash, you mean?” he asked.

“Yes, in real money.”

“Well, now, it’s kind of funny your askin’ that, ’cause ’twas only a day or two ago I was figgerin’ that out myself. Last year, nigh as I could reckon up, it cost me thirty-seven dollars and eighty-odd cents.”

Acquaintances in the village gave him potatoes and other vegetables and an occasional picnic party like ours left eatables when they departed. The rest of the food

supply came from the flats and the bay. The high cost of living had not effected Centre Cove, apparently.

He told us, with naïve triumph, how he had made some "easy money" the previous February. He had raked and opened scallops enough to half fill a two-gallon can. Then to these he had added another gallon of fresh water which had, as he said, "swole 'em up" so that the can was full. We had heard of this procedure before; it was an old scalloper's trick. Then he had put the filled and sealed can on a wheelbarrow and, in that chilly February weather, and through sand and grass, had wheeled the barrow and its load the six miles to the railway station in town, where he saw it tagged and shipped to a dealer in Boston. Then he had wheeled the empty barrow home again, another six miles.

"And they sent me a check for seven dollars," he crowed gleefully. "Seven dollars! And it never took me more'n a half day to rake them scallops and open 'em. Easy money, I call *that* dicker."

Which is not what we should call it.

Caleb Pound was, in spite of his oddities, a fine old fellow. He was not at all the type of Old Beauregard and Stephen Peter and Barney Gould and some of the others. These latter were regarded as a little "cracked", whereas he was merely unconventional and peculiar. Any human being who lived alone, as he did, in a place like Centre Cove, would soon become peculiar, even if he were not so at the beginning.

"But," I can imagine our Midwestern friend saying, "we don't mean people like this Beauregard and the rest.



TIME OFF FOR GRUB



Those fellows were 'nuts.' What we meant were the drily witty old Cape Codders you have written about so often. Where were they? *We* couldn't find any of them."

And again I venture to remind him that very possibly he did not look for them in the right places and, also, that the self-respecting man or woman, on the Cape or anywhere else, does not "show off" before strangers. That the dry New England wit used to be there — yes, and still is there, we all know, but mutual understanding and friendship must be established before one hears a great deal of it. No one can be more reserved than a Yankee when he suspects you of drawing him out for exhibition purposes.

If you know him, however, and he knows and likes you, he will express himself naturally and then you may hear him at his best. And it is a pretty good best, too, or so I think, although being myself a Cape Cod Yankee, my opinion may be a trifle biased.

For instance, if a group of strangers had been present, I doubt if I should have heard old Sam Glover, of Buzzards Bay, tell the story of his arrest for taking "short" lobsters and his reply to the judge's question in the court at Barnstable. He might, by request, have told the story, but I am sure it would have lacked a good deal of the Glover flavor.

"You see," said Sam, "we'd had comp'ny come the night afore, my cousin's folks from up Worcester way, they was, and I knew they liked lobsters. I had a pot set down abreast my house and I turned out early next mornin' and went down and hauled it. Well, there was a

few lobsters in it, but I'll have to own up they wa'n't none of 'em so big they'd outgrewed short pants. But, anyhow, they was lobsters and my cousin's folks was expectin' lobsters, so I shoved 'em into a covered basket I had along with me and headed for home. I only met one livin' soul on the main road, but, if you'll believe it, the one I met was the game and fish warden."

"Tough luck!" was my comment. "What was he doing there?"

"Lord knows. 'Twa'n't but about quarter to six and they sartin don't pay him enough to keep him up all night worryin' about what to do with his money. But, anyhow, he was there and I was there and so was them divilish lobsters. We passed the time of day with one another and then, says he, 'Out kind of early, ain't ye, Sam?' 'Oh, not 'special,' says I. 'My dad used to tell me that turnin' out early made a fellow healthy. He used to say it made him wealthy and wise, too, but I never got up quite soon enough for either of them, I guess likely. Anyhow, I ain't out any earlier than you be *this* mornin'.'

"He laughed and I laughed. So far as I know, the lobsters didn't laugh, though maybe I would if I'd been in their place. When we got through bein' comical, which was pretty soon as far as I was concerned, that warden asked me what I had in the basket. 'Oh, nawthin' much,' says I. 'That's what I'm afraid of,' says he. 'Better let me look, hadn't you?' So he looked. Them lobsters was pretty small when I took 'em out of the pot but I'd have sworn they'd shrunk an inch apiece since then. 'Better come

over to court next Saturday,' or whenever 'twas, he told me. 'You won't be lonesome; the judge and me'll be there to keep you comp'ny. . . . Sorry.'

"Well, I was sorry too, but I figgered I might be consider'ble sorrier if I didn't go, so I was on hand in that court when they sung out my name. Old Judge Fox was on the bench; he's dead now, but he must have been close to eighty then, seven or eight years older than I was, and I'm no spring pullet. He listened to what the warden had to tell and then he called on me.

"'Have you anything to say?' he wanted to know. There was a lot I'd like to have said, but it didn't seem like the safest place to say it in. 'Why, no, your honor,' says I, 'I haven't, not 'special. I'm pretty sure that game warden wasn't expectin' to see me and I'm darn sure I wa'n't expectin' to see *him*.'

"'Is that all?' asks the judge.

"'Um-hm,' says I, 'guess so. All else I've got to say is that I'm standin' here at the bar, hopin' for mercy, same as you and me'll both have to do afore many more years, I presume likely.'"

Sam stopped here and grinned. "He let you off, didn't he?" I asked. "He should have, after that."

Sam shook his head. "Fined me forty dollars," he declared. "That's the kind of lettin' off *he* done."

Yes, one must know the Caper well to get stories like Sam's and hear them told as he told this one. One must be admitted to the inner circle and have been privileged to sit with the group at the Skippers' Club in the days and evenings when that club was in its prime; or to join in

the chat at the post-office in winter, while the mail is being sorted; or go down the bay with an old-time skipper with whom you have sailed on many trips. The yarns themselves may not be remarkable, but the way in which they are told is characteristic and the side remarks are best of all.

He is a great talker, that Cape Codder, if he is in the mood and has the right listener or listeners. Cap'n Ben — I have said so much about him in these chapters — was a talker, although when some consequential person attempted to patronize or condescend to him, he could be taciturn enough. But get him in company with another old salt-water crony like Cap'n Sol Nickerson, and he could and would talk and remember and yarn continuously — or as continuously as Cap'n Sol, who was something of a talker himself, would permit.

I once asked a Yankee friend of theirs and mine which of those two, in his opinion, talked the most.

"Well," he said, after consideration, "I don't know. Either of 'em can talk the sails off a windmill, but I should judge — yes, I should judge — that Cap'n Ben can probably get more words out of one breath than Cap'n Sol can."

If the Cape Cod wit — or the New England wit, which is the same thing — has characteristics of its own, I should say they lay in understatement, or perhaps underemphasis, and always the unsmiling gravity with which the point of the joke is delivered.

An acquaintance of mine was telling me of a ne'er-do-well in his native town, whose father had been a hard-

working blacksmith in the pre-automobile days. At his death the old man left his little property, including his house, shop and business, to his only son. His son's first move, after obtaining the inheritance, was to marry. His second was to sell the house and, with the proceeds, buy a second-hand motorcar and, with his wife, start in that car for California. The blacksmith shop was closed and left to take care of itself.

They never reached their destination. Somewhere along the route their supply of money gave out and, after a year or two, during which a child was born, they came rattling back to their native village in the car, or what was left of it.

There was no home for them to go to. They had no money, they had been living on charity and whatever the wife could earn by doing washing and scrubbing, for months. Gasoline and oil for the car during the homeward drive had been begged, for the most part. They were destitute, and kind-hearted neighbors and townspeople found them rooms to live in and odd jobs for the wife to do, either in her own home or theirs.

"But how about the husband?" I asked. "Ike, you call him. Doesn't he do anything?"

"Oh, yes. Ike's got a steady job. He's opened the old blacksmith shop and sits in the sun outside of it every day in summer and inside by the fire in winter. He used to help his father shoe horses years ago."

"But there isn't any horse-shoeing done in your town nowadays, is there?"

"No-o. No, and there never will be again. But," with

a solemn shake of the head, "you have to give Ike that much credit. When it starts up, he's ready."

Perhaps this is not funny at all. As I put it down on paper, it does not seem tremendously funny to me. But if you had heard it told as I did, gravely and with a touch of earnest admiration when Ike's "steady job" was described, I think you would have laughed.

Has the old-time dry wit gone from the Cape, as the horse-shoeing has gone, and most of the blue truck-wagons and almost all the catboats and the fish-flakes and the saltworks and the glass factory and the rest? Has the Cape Codder's own type of humor been sophisticated out of him, as his towns and villages and roads have been made over and conventionalized during these later years? I have said once that I do not think it has. Now I say it again.

Last summer a friend told us of a recent happening in the community where he lives. During the winter it is a small community indeed, but from June to September it swarms with summer cottagers and vacationists. Among the town's residents, winter as well as summer, are two men named — well, named anything you like — "Williams" will do well enough. One Williams is a prosperous, well-to-do cranberry grower and banker, member of the Board of Selectmen, and prominent in town affairs. The other is a veteran clam-digger, weir-tender and long-shoreman. The first Williams is a fine-looking gentleman; the other is, as our friend described it, "homelier than a sculpin with the mumps."

Among the town's summer cottagers was a lady with

a strong aesthetic sense. This was her first summer in that neighborhood, she knew few of the year-around residents, but she had already fallen in love with the place, planned to spend many, if not all, of her remaining summers there, and she wished to show her appreciation in some tangible way. She conceived an idea and she spoke to some of her friends about it.

They told her that she should see Mr. Williams. He had lived there all his life and his opinion was greatly respected by the permanent population. She had never met Mr. Williams but she set about meeting him immediately. At the bank, where she inquired, they told her he had gone down to the wharf and she would probably find him there.

So to the wharf she went and asked the first loungee she met there if Mr. Williams was in the vicinity.

"Why, yes, ma'am," was the reply. "There he is, right over yonder."

The man he pointed out to her was not the banker Williams, but the other, the sunburned, leather-necked old longshoreman. The loungee of whom she inquired had taken it for granted that she wished to buy clams or lobsters, as did so many summer housekeepers. She crossed the wharf and approached the veteran, who was winding a length of cod line about the cracked handle of a clam hoe.

"Excuse me," she asked, "but are you Mr. Williams?"

He raised his wrinkled, unshaven, ugly old face and regarded her from under bushy, bleached eyebrows.

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.

"Oh, I'm *so* glad to meet you. They told me you might be at the wharf."

"Yes, ma'am, here's where I most ginerally be — when I ain't somewheres else."

"Now, Mr. Williams, I won't take but a little of your time, I promise you. You've lived in Wellmouth all your life, haven't you?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Oh, I'm so glad! You are *just* the man I want to talk with. I want to ask your advice. You see, this is my first summer here, but I am in love with the place and I want to help it in some way, to *do* something for it, if you know what I mean."

Williams had not the least idea what she meant, but he said "Yes, ma'am."

"My idea is very vague, but it is something like this: It occurred to me that some of us summer people — myself among the number — might subscribe a sum of money to be used in beautifying Wellmouth. We can't be too extravagant, of course, but we would like to do something, some little thing which would make this charming town more lovely, if that is possible, than it is now. They told me to come to you, because your suggestions would be valuable. Now can you suggest anything — anything not too expensive? If you can, I shall be so much obliged."

Williams took off his shabby, fish-scale-spotted old cap, and ran his fingers through what was left of his grizzled old hair. Of course, he realized the mistake she had made, that it was the other Williams to whom she had

been sent for counsel; but he, characteristically, did not tell her that. He chewed methodically.

"Well, now, ma'am," he drawled. "Let's see if I've got this straight. You want to make this town prettier than 'tis now, but you don't want to spend much money. Is that right?"

"Yes, yes, that is exactly right. Have you an idea? Oh, I hope so!"

"Well, ma'am, I don't know's I ain't got one. It would make Wellmouth consider'ble more pretty and 'twould be cheap, too."

"Splendid! What is it?"

"Why, ma'am, you give me fifty cents and I'd move to Ostable."

Ostable, of course, was the adjoining town.

Yes, there are still "characters" and dry humor on Cape Cod, if you know where and how to look for them.

The story of "Williams" and the public-spirited summer resident is a typical one. All up and down the Cape one hears yarns of its kind. I have heard hundreds of them, yarns like that of the stage driver and his passenger, already told in this chapter. Many of them are worthwhile and practically all of them fit the locality and the people. And, in so many cases, the yarn spinner claims to know or have known the person or persons concerned in the happening. Just where and when the hero of the tale said this or that and why he said it.

But one learns, after a time, to take the story for the story's sake and to reserve a certain amount of

skepticism where its localization is concerned. My friend who told the Williams yarn believed it to be absolutely true, I am certain, and, as he told it, the names used were those of living individuals whom we both knew or had met, and the town where the incident was said to have occurred was the town we were in at that time.

That ought to prove its truth in every particular; but does it? My friend had, in all probability, heard it from a friend of his, who had heard it from someone else, who, in turn, had heard it from another somebody, and so on. And, somewhere along the line, there might have been a somebody who, in order to make his yarn a trifle more appealing, transferred names and localities to those nearer home. Perhaps, as the tale was told to this particular somebody, it was not "Williams" who offered to move for a fifty-cent fee but "Smith"; and Smith might have lived in Skowhegan, Maine, instead of "Wellmouth" on Cape Cod. But "Smith" was a character much like "Williams" and every long-time resident of "Wellmouth" knew "Williams"; so —

Mind you, I am not claiming the Williams yarn to be fiction. I believe it to be true in every particular. But I am using it to make my point as to the wisdom of skepticism in the matter of the localization of a good story. I am offering this explanation in self-defense. I have spun a good many yarns in these "Yesterdays" chapters and at least some of them are sure to find readers who will sniff and say, "Humph! The idea of claiming that as a Cape Cod story! Why, that happened in the town I was born in out in Minnesota and I used

to know the man, or woman, who did, or said, those things."

Very well. But, reader, are you *sure* your Minnesota acquaintance actually did or said them? I am not. If your faith had been rudely shaken as many times as mine has been, you would not be, either.

Once I was planning to write the story of a little girl adopted by two old retired sea captains. I needed an incident to introduce my little heroine, and a relative of ours, who happened also to be the president of the firm publishing my books, told me a story which I thought would be just what I needed. He said it was absolute fact and the event took place at the funeral of his wife's aunt in a Vermont town.

The old lady, the aunt, had been an important personage in that town and her funeral was largely attended. The parlor was crowded, every chair occupied. The minister was on the point of rising to begin the ceremony when up the aisle came a dignified and wealthy spinster who had been a close friend of the deceased. Behind her came the local undertaker, carrying a chair which he had taken from one of the rooms on the floor above. That chair was an importation from abroad and was peculiar to itself. Under its seat was a music-box and when one sat in the chair the box began to play.

The undertaker placed the chair for the late comer, the minister rose and opened his prayer book, the dignified spinster sat down, and the box struck up, "The Campbells 're Coming. Hurrah! Hurrah!"

I liked that story and asked permission to incorporate

it in my first chapter, which permission was granted. The novel had been on sale for a few months when, on the steps of the post-office in the Cape town where I spend one half of the year, I was introduced to a portly person who seemed to have a grievance against me.

"Tell me," he demanded, rather hotly, I thought, "how did you get hold of that music-chair story you put into that latest book of yours?"

"Oh," I replied serenely, "that is a true story. The incident happened in Vermont at the funeral of the aunt of the wife of a good friend of mine."

His florid face grew redder. "It did not!" he snorted. "It happened at the funeral of my own grandfather in New Hampshire. That story, sir, is an heirloom in our family. You tell it well enough, except that you are wrong when you say the chair played, 'The Campbells Are Coming.' That chair, sir, was brought from Germany and it played 'Ach, Mein Liebe Augustine.'"

Which was bad enough, but, after I returned to our winter home near New York, I received a letter written by an inmate of an Old Ladies' Home near Augusta, Georgia.

"Dear Sir:" the letter began. "We have been reading your novel aloud here at the Home and it occurred to me that you might be interested to know where the incident of the 'music-chair' which you describe in your book actually took place. One of the ladies here was born and reared in a little town not far from Augusta, and the chair played at the funeral of her grandmother there. You have it exactly right, except for the tune

which the chair played. It was not 'The Campbells Are Coming', but 'Comin' Through the Rye.' "

And since then I have been informed, with dates and particulars, of two other funerals, in places remotely distant from each other, where that chair played.

If a writer cannot believe his own publisher, who can he believe? Do you wonder I am skeptical as to the localization of a good story?

There have been so many similar disillusionments in my experience. There was one story in particular — oh, it is a good story! I wish I could tell it here, but I shall not. I heard it when I was very young and then I knew — or thought I knew — the gray-haired captain who fell down the cellar stairs with his wife's very old and very precious pitcher in his hand. I knew where he lived, his name and his wife's name, and the very words he said when, instead of asking if he had broken his neck, she asked if he had broken the pitcher. And what he did after he said those words — I knew that, too. And, as I grew older, I told and retold that story with implicit trust, taking pains to name and describe the old gentleman and add that he lived just across the road from us in our home village.

And then, one day, I picked up Holman Day's "Pine Tree Ballads" and read the tale in verse. But Mr. Day's old mariner lived in Maine and fell down a Maine flight of stairs. And, years afterward, when I was doing some story-telling and public reading throughout New England, I began to tell the story, not, more's the pity, as a genuine Cape Cod yarn, but as a horrible example, to

make the point I am trying to make here — namely, that the average good story cannot be safely pinned to any locality. That it is as hard to locate and keep in one place as a flea.

During that lecture trip I discovered no less than nine different towns where that old fellow had actually lived and where he had met with his accident. In Danbury, Connecticut, one aged citizen waylaid me after the reading and said, almost with tears in his eyes, "My dear sir, if you will only walk with me across this very square, I will show you the house where the man *really* fell down stairs with the pitcher."

I had come close to breaking his heart. Pathetic, wasn't it?

There! Having provided myself with an alibi in case of need, I feel safer.

The deep-sea yarn, the tale of adventure and unusual happening in the far corners — the wet corners — of the earth has pretty well vanished from the Cape's conversation. Back in the '70's and early '80's it was prevalent. In our town, distinctly a deep-sea community, the mail hour at the post-office was a thrilling period to a romantic and imaginative youngster. To sit quietly in the back row of the circle about the stove and hear those old seadogs spin one yarn after another was an experience. There was not a man there who had not been in at least one wreck and several who had been in three or four.

The talk began at the Cape and shifted from there to the West Indies, and from there to Cape Horn, and from

there to the Java Straits, and so on around the world. There were men who had fought with Chinese pirates and others who, after days and nights in open boats, had been picked up by passing vessels or made landings at islands which are mere dots upon the maps. Men who had brought their ships safely through tropical tornadoes or Indian Ocean typhoons. One who had sailed within sight of a volcano spouting white-hot lava from the midst of a desolate sea, building a new island where no island had been before. Men who had been whaling in the Arctic and others who had traded beads and calico with cannibals for copra and pearls. Two, at least, whose vessels had been taken and burned by the *Alabama* in the privateering days of the Civil War.

A few of these yarns, or abridgments of them, have been recorded in books like "Yarmouth Sea Captains" and "Brewster Sea Captains", published by descendants of some of those old salts. But, as briefly set down there, they lose much of the flavor which was theirs when told by the men themselves. And many of them — as I dimly remember, some of the best — were unobtainable when the records were compiled and are now lost forever.

As for us youngsters, we listened and thrilled and went away and forgot. I would give something now to be permitted to join that circle — the circle about that post-office stove — and hear those same yarns spun by those same comfortable, dry-spoken, pipe-smoking old retired mariners. I would not forget now, I can promise you that. No, indeed! I would go straight home and sit down and write, for I should have more than enough to

write about. Yes, and it would be worth while writing about, too.

But the opportunity is gone. Those old fellows were talking of their yesterdays, just as we have been talking about ours. And soon it will be tomorrow and we, and our generation, will belong to the yesterdays of our sons and daughters.

Which is not offered as a new and original thought, but merely as one which occurs to me rather poignantly now, as I move on to one more of those confounded birth-days.



21 1960 SEP 13 19

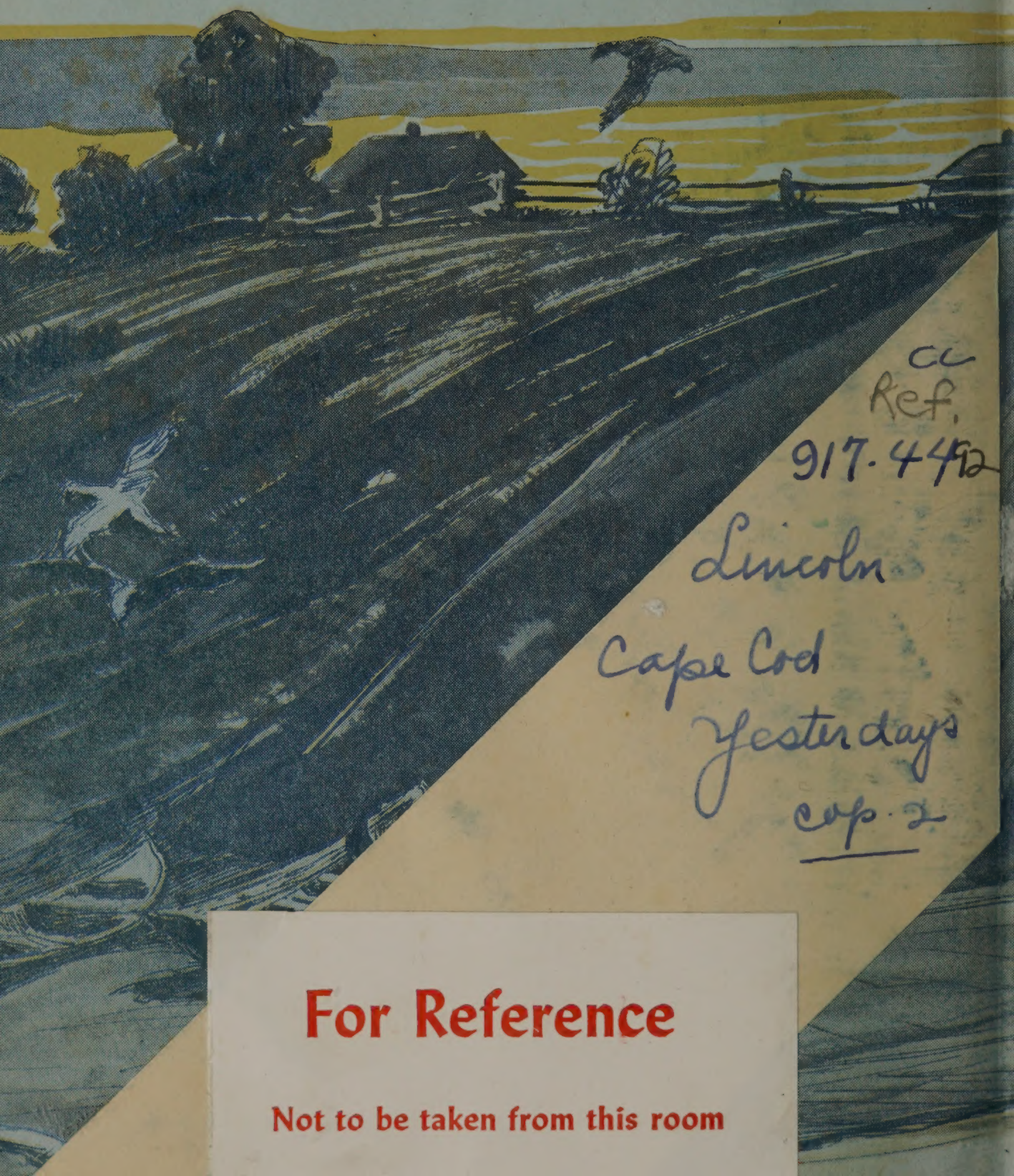
3 1961

APR. F 1961

APR. 16

1961

JUN



CC
Ref.

917-4452

Lincoln

Cape Cod

yesterdays

cop. 2

For Reference

Not to be taken from this room

BREWSTER LADIES' LIBRARY



0 2200 0054152 8



